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## The Role of Institutional Relations with Alumni Major Donors in Evangelical Higher Education

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS WITH ALUMNI MAJOR DONORS  
IN EVANGELICAL HIGHER EDUCATION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

BRIAN J. GARDNER

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MAY 2010

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To Mom, who inspired me to begin this journey.

To Daniel, who gave me the impetus to complete it.

And to Christy, who has endured by my side the whole time.

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## ABSTRACT

American higher education has never been more expensive. Its continued excellence and accessibility depends even more today on charitable subsidy. As previous beneficiaries of that charitable subsidy, alumni are the most logical benefactor of its sustenance. The relatively few alumni who can give most generously make the difference in the success of any fund raising effort. Understanding the motivation of alumni major gift prospects to give such gifts is therefore critical to securing them.

This study seeks to understand 1) the strategies and processes institutions employ in engaging alumni major donors, 2) the motivations of these donors to give or not give, and 3) the perception of these donors regarding whether relational activities by the institution can motivate their major-gift support. It does so in the context of evangelical higher education, which has an alumni base that is arguably motivated to give back to God through one's church if not through one's alma mater. The case-study design of three Council of Christian College and University (CCCU) institutions generates descriptive data through interviews with both administrators and alumni and institutional communication materials and websites. Data analysis involves looking at these data by themselves and juxtaposed with Kelly's (1998) two-way symmetrical model of fund raising and Jeavons and Basinger's (2000) study entitled, Growing Givers' Hearts. Kelly's (1998) model suggests the most ethical form of fund raising is found where a donor's opportunity to shape institutional mission is symmetrical, or equal to, an

institution's opportunity to persuade the donor to give. Jeavons and Basinger (2000) contend that organizations which purport an evangelical mission give evidence to their faith in the God who has enabled that mission by the ways they seek its funding. Not only must organizations do no harm in securing funds, Jeavons and Basinger (2000) argue that fund raising ought to grow givers' hearts closer to God in donors' process of giving.

The institutions in this study pursue strategies and processes noted in the existing literature on fund raising. They also exhibit some evidence of utilizing Kelly's (1998) two-way symmetrical model of fund raising and pursuing gifts with the tone Jeavons and Basinger (2000) believe to reflect a mature faith. The motivations of alumni major donors to give reflect those in the existing literature. These donors also perceive their alma mater has the capacity to influence their motivation to give larger gifts by the relationships they keep with them.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Voluntary Sector of the American Economy

Organizations representing the voluntary, or third, sector of the economy are distinguished from those in the public and private sectors because of their unique purpose. Unlike those in the public sector, voluntary organizations are not agencies of the state. As a result, organizational missions are generally defined and controlled by the marketplace of group interests and resources rather than government bureaucracy. But unlike those in the private sector, voluntary organizations exist to maximize resource allocation toward activities that advance a public purpose of its stakeholders instead of generating profits that solely benefit individual shareholders.

The voluntary sector has become a significant dimension of the U.S. economy during the past half century. Giving USA estimates that Americans gave over \$306 billion in charitable contributions during 2007 (Brown, 2008, p. 9). According to data that Giving USA has collected over its 53 years of existence, this estimated amount indeed reflects real economic growth in American giving. As a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), estimated giving has grown from 1.5% in 1954 (Brown, 2005, p. 33), to 2.2% in 2007 (Brown, 2008, p. 28).

The growth and sustenance in estimated giving since 1995 has been unusual for any time period in the past 53 years. From 1995 until 1999, the Standard & Poor's 500

Index grew over 120% (Brown, 2005, p. 13). Furthermore, a larger percentage of people were working in the U.S. economy in 1997 than during the previous decade and the largest rate of population growth since the 1950s occurred during the 1990s (p. 13). These economic indicators subsequently contributed to the significant growth that occurred to both real giving and giving as a percentage of GDP just before the Millennium. From 1995 until 2000, estimated real giving grew at the most disproportionate levels of any period between 1954 and 2004 (Brown, 2005, p. 33). Estimated giving as a percentage of GDP grew from 1.7% in 1995, just 0.2% above the 53-year low of 1.5% achieved in 1954, to 2.3% in 2000 (p. 33).

Estimated giving decreased from 2000 to 2004. Three consecutive years of stock market declines from 2000 through 2002, the first time since the Great Depression, help explain the relative decreases in estimated giving during this time (Brown, 2005, p. 14). Even so, giving has remained relatively strong since the Millennium. Estimated giving rose to the 53-year high of 2.4% of GDP in 2005, attributed to aid responses received for the Indian Ocean tsunami and Hurricane Katrina (Brown, 2008, p. 28). Furthermore, estimated giving has consecutively remained at 2.2% of GDP or higher from 1999 through 2007 (p. 28).

Growth in giving becomes more tangible when expressed at the level of the charitable organizations it effects. During a 50-year span, the number of charitable organizations in the U.S. increased from 500,000 to 1.4 million and the estimated average gift revenue to each of those organizations increased from \$75,840 (in 2004 dollars) to \$180,000 (Brown, 2005, p. 11). In addition to a 180% increase in the number of

charitable organizations, the impact of these voluntary sector organizations has been multiplied by a real growth rate of over 137% in per-capita revenue during the same period.

The composition of charitable organization types and the respective proportions of support they receive have changed over 50 years. Organizations in 1954 served the interests of religion, education, health, private social welfare, and foreign aid (Brown, 2005, p. 11). Today, those in the arts, environment/animal welfare, “public-society benefit,” scientific and social science research, and community and private foundations have been added (p. 11). While the religious sector continues to represent the largest category of giving and continues to experience annual growth, it has seen the largest decline proportional to other giving sectors (p. 56). Foundations have seen the largest proportional growth and have been largely responsible, along with the commencement of tracking international affairs and environment/animal welfare sectors during the 1980s, in supplanting the proportion of aggregate giving religion has historically received (p. 56). Much of the growth of support for foundations emerged with economic expansion during the 1990s. During this time, the number of new foundations grew by 41.3% (p. 13).

As the number of foundations has grown, so has their collective capacity to provide charitable support in accordance with their respective missions. From the period of 1975-1979 until 2000-2004, foundation support precipitously increased from 5.6% to 11.4% of all giving (Brown, 2005, p. 27). Increases in both the total number and asset values of foundations during the 1990s enabled foundation giving to increase by 123% (p. 13).

While the proportional trend of charitable giving from foundations has increased, it has decreased among individuals. From 1975-1979 until 2000-2004, giving by individuals has been in steady decline from 83.4% of all giving to 75.5% (Brown, 2005, p. 27). Neither bequest, ranging from 6.6% (1980-1984) to 9.4% (1970-1974) (p. 27), nor corporate giving, ranging from 3.9% (1970-1974) to 6.1% (1985-1989) (p. 27), has exhibited the consistency of proportional trends in overall giving as have individual and foundation support.

At first, the trends in these statistics might suggest foundation support is supplanting individual giving. It is important to note, however, that individual giving still represents over three-quarters of all charitable giving. And this does not include bequest giving, which is individual giving after death. Furthermore, the foundation category includes donor-advised funds and private foundations, both which serve as vehicles through which many individuals make their charitable contributions. While it has grown in sophistication, charitable giving is still predominantly an individual activity in the U.S. today.

The voluntary sector of the U.S. economy has grown exponentially in the past 53 years. As it has, its scope of service has transcended religion, education, health, private social welfare, and foreign aid to include the arts, environment/animal welfare, “public-society benefit,” scientific and social science research, and community and private foundations. While religion is still significant today, it is being proportionately displaced by other voluntary support sectors. Financial gifts still come largely from individuals, but perhaps the wealthy are writing fewer personal checks. Growth in foundation giving

and wealth in the U.S. economy since 1995 suggest that foundations may be the vehicles through which the wealthy are seeking to strategically transform and direct their financial capital into social capital.

### Philanthropy in American Higher Education

Of the \$306 billion in 2007 estimated charitable contributions by Giving USA (Brown, 2008, p. 9), statistics from the Council for Aid to Education's (CAE) 2008 Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) study estimate that higher education received \$29.75 billion in 2007 (Kaplan, 2009, p. 2). This is 9.7% of estimated overall giving. In line with Giving USA, the VSE study estimates that a majority of support came from personal contributions. Alumni and non-alumni individuals contributed 27.8% and 19.0%, respectively for a total of 46.8% (p. 2). Foundations represented 28.6% of giving to higher education and corporations, 16.1% (p. 2).

Strikingly, individual support is estimated to be a considerably smaller percentage of giving to higher education (46.8%) than it is to giving overall, which is 82.4% when bequest giving is included (Brown, 2008, p. 13). Furthermore, foundation (28.6%) and corporation (16.1%) support are considerably larger for higher education than they are for giving overall (12.6% and 5.1%, respectively) (p. 13). Going back to 1968, the 2008 VSE study estimated support for higher education from individuals has ranged from approximately 46% to 54% (Kaplan, 2009, p. 33). Therefore in at least the past 40 years, foundations (18%-29%) and corporations (14%-25%) (p. 33) have played a disproportionately more significant role in the support of higher education. While data were not readily available for corporations, 2005 foundation grant dollars to education

were 25% of total expenditures and the single largest foundation grant category (Foundation Center, 2007, p. 4). It is likely that corporations invest to build good relations with both students who represent a prospective labor force and faculty whose technological developments represent opportunities for the marketplace. Foundations have interest in advancing the public good, and they may see higher education as a low-risk, high-impact partner in achieving this mission.

Even so, the 2008 VSE study also indicated that 334 institutions received gifts from donor-advised funds (personally directed, legally uncontrolled) that would have increased the average of these institutions' aggregated individual giving by 4.9% had the gifts not been accounted as organizational gifts (Kaplan, 2009, p. 15). Another 262 institutions reported gifts from small businesses that were personally directed that would have boosted individual giving rates by 10.2% (p. 15). While these gifts do not undermine how relatively significant corporate and foundation giving is to higher education, they help demonstrate that giving to higher education is still predominantly personal.

Percentage of alumni support is a significant measure in higher education giving because it is the base of support that directly benefited from the education that is provided. A high participation rate might suggest a high degree of value for the education an institution's alumni received. While the average gift from alumni increased 8.0% from 2007 to 2008 among VSE study respondents (Kaplan, 2009, p. 10), the percentage of alumni making contributions continued a decline begun in 2002, when it was 13.4% (p. 10). In 2008, participation was 11.0%, lower than the 2007 participation



rate of 11.7% (p. 10). Participation rates in 2008 ranged from 0.8% at public associate's degree-granting institutions to 23.9% at private baccalaureate colleges (p. 10).

“Individuals are more likely to support the institution that granted them an undergraduate degree than they are to support an institution they attended from which they did not graduate, or from which they received a graduate degree,” (p. 11) however all of the preceding alumni categories are counted for participation in VSE. “Counting only undergraduate-degreed alumni, alumni participation increased slightly among a core group of respondents – from 13.4% in 2007 to 13.9% in 2008” (p. 11).

Large, or major, gift support is significant to higher education. In 2008, the three largest gifts by living individuals represented an average of 26.9% of all living individual gift support (Kaplan, 2009, p. 15). The three largest gifts in other categories also represented a substantial portion of all giving in the respective category: Corporations (33.1%), foundation grants (41.5%), and bequests (64.1%) (p. 15).

Voluntary support is categorized into current and capital operational purposes. Current purposes are unrestricted (7.7%) and restricted (45.9%) operational budget support (Kaplan, 2009, p. 8). Capital purposes are deferred gifts (2.7%), property, buildings, and equipment (14.0%), unrestricted income endowment (2.2%), restricted income endowment (27.6%), and loan funds (0.0%) (p. 8).

Unlike many voluntary sector categories, higher education enjoys multiple revenue streams, including tuition, housing and student fees, state and federal government appropriations, and auxiliary business activities. This is reflected in the fact that voluntary support to higher education was just 11.8% of total educational and general

expenditures in 2008 (Kaplan, 2009, p. 9). This figure ranged from 2.9% among public two-year institutions to 22.5% of private liberal arts schools (p. 9).

Slightly less than 10% of voluntary sector support is directed toward higher education. Voluntary support to higher education represents slightly more than 10% of total educational and general expenditures. While individual support is significant for higher education, it appears less than individual giving to the voluntary sector as a whole. Alumni participation rates are declining while alumni giving is increasing, suggesting those who do give are giving more. However, institutions experiencing increased graduate enrollment or greater undergraduate student attrition may ultimately contend with smaller alumni participation rates because individuals who did not complete an undergraduate degree may not consider the school they attended their alma mater. The three largest gifts in a fiscal year represent a significant proportion of individual, corporate, foundation, and bequest giving. Almost 90% of gifts to current and capital operational purposes are restricted (Kaplan, 2009, p. 8).

#### Evangelical Higher Education and Philanthropy

Understanding the subculture of Evangelicalism is prerequisite to understanding evangelical higher education. Bebbington (1992, p.3) defines Evangelicalism on the basis of four characteristics. One is conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed. Another is activism, the expression of the gospel in effort. A third is Biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible. And last is crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

This definition aligns with the values of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), the association whose mission is to “advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education” (CCCU, 2007). Therefore, institutions that are members of the CCCU are associated with institutions of evangelical higher education for the purpose of this study.

The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) was founded in 1976 and included 38 member institutions (CCCU, 2007). Since that time, the CCCU has grown to 105 member institutions in the U.S. and three in Canada. The CCCU is a subset of approximately 900 “religiously affiliated,” 1,600 private, four-year, non-profit, and 4,200 degree-granting colleges and universities in higher education. All U.S. CCCU members are regionally accredited, four-year institutions with “sound finances” (p. 3) that provide a broad curriculum in the arts and sciences and hire full-time faculty and administrators who are Christians. In addition, the CCCU has 75 affiliate schools in 24 countries with equal Christian commitments but lesser organizational requirements. Enrollment among member institutions today is 300,000 with affiliate enrollment adding another 100,000 (2007). The total number of alumni of CCCU member institutions is 1.55 million (2007). Operating budgets of member institutions total \$3.4 billion and endowment market value exceeds \$3.3 billion (2007).

Evangelical institutions are a very small sector of American higher education but have experienced significant growth relative to higher education as a whole. In a 2001 report, the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) indicates that fall 1998 enrollment at CCCU institutions was 177,079 (CCCU, 2001). This represented

only 11.9% of religious-affiliated institutional enrollment (1,485,481) and 1.2% of all higher education institutional enrollments (14,549,189) at that time. However, the CCCU report goes on to show that enrollment growth of its member institutions rose 36.9% from 1990 through 1998. This is during a time when enrollment growth at all U.S. institutions was 5.3% and the next closest segment, religious-affiliated institutions, was 15.6%. The report's general explanation for this significant growth is the student perception that institutions are providing a distinctly Christian world-view education that maintains high academic standards, provides whole-person development, and is financially accessible. Student demand for such an education is implicit to the CCCU's explanation.

Many CCCU member institutions are also members of the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC). In 2001, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) published the results of a survey among CIC member institutions pertaining to advancement activities in fiscal-year 1997-1998 (Willmer, 2001, p. 2). Of the CIC's 480 member institutions, 298 participated in this survey (p. 4). Of those that participated, 47 were members of the CCCU (cross-reference of Appendix B). This represents the best available data pertaining to fund raising among CCCU member institutions.

Some data from the CIC study, conducted in 1997-98, are comparable with that from the VSE study noted previously. Miller cites that 21% of gift income came from alumni, 14% from "other friends," 9% from businesses, and 16% from foundations (2001, p. 97). Figures in each of these categories trail those found among the 2005 VSE study's alumni (29.9%), non-alumni (24.5%), corporation (17.7%), and foundation

(20.7%) contribution categories for 1997-98 (Kaplan, 2006, p. 31). Some of this discrepancy is explained by additional categories employed by the CIC study, including trustees (11%), estates (7%), government (3%), faculty (2%), parents (2%), and “other” (1%) (Miller, 2001, p. 97). Excepting government and “other,” all other CIC study categories can be classified as individual giving. This increases individual giving’s overall proportion to 57%, slightly higher than the VSE study’s 54.3% for individual giving. While the CIC and VSE studies report somewhat comparable individual, corporate, and foundation giving, it remains unclear how alumni participation rates relate between studies.

Other comparisons include both overall voluntary support income and unrestricted gift income’s proportion to total educational budget. It is worth noting that the VSE study refers to revenue and expenditures as total budget (Kaplan, 2006, p. 8), implying both revenue and expenditures to be equal. This is generally acceptable, considering the context of the VSE study respondents’ non-profit corporate status. So, figures within the CIC study, which references budget as institutional revenue (Willmer, 2001, p. 7), will be considered equal to the same figures in the VSE study. Overall voluntary support income was 8.3% of institutional revenue in the CIC study (p. 7). This is in line with the VSE study responses, which averaged 11.3% (Kaplan, 2006, p. 8) and ranged from 2.7% to 21.1% (p. 9) of educational and general expenditures. The CIC study reported unrestricted gift income as 7.5% of overall institutional revenue (Miller, 2001, p. 105). However, the VSE study reported unrestricted gift income as 8.8% of voluntary support income (Kaplan, 2006, p. 8). Because voluntary support income in the

VSE study is only 8.3% of educational and general expenditures (considered synonymous with institutional revenue), unrestricted income amounts to only 0.7% of total institutional budget, significantly less than the CIC study's average of 7.5%.

The CCCU institutions in the U.S. are distinct from other institutions in higher education today, even other religious institutions, because of their particular evangelical missions. While relatively insignificant in total enrollment, CCCU institutions have enjoyed substantially larger rates of growth in enrollment than religious-affiliated or higher education as a whole. Many CCCU institutions are also affiliated with the CIC, which conducted a survey related to fund development in 1997-98. Giving from sources such as individuals, corporations, and foundations aligned closely with the VSE survey from the same period, although alumni participation rates could not be compared. Voluntary support was a slightly smaller percentage of the educational budget in the CIC survey than the VSE. But, interestingly, average unrestricted gift income of CIC study participants was more than 10 times larger, as a percentage of the educational budget, than the average from the VSE survey. This level of unrestricted support suggests that CIC and CCCU institutions may enjoy more trusting donors than VSE study participants. It may also mean that CIC and CCCU schools are not fully leveraging restricted gift opportunities that reflect the intersection of donor interests and institutional funding requirements.

#### Reasons People Give

What causes people to give? To help determine this, Schervish (1997) utilizes a model which serves as a descriptive framework for those "mobilizing factors" (p. 110)

that influence decisions to financially give for the first time. Schervish's model of identification contrasts with models of altruism for giving motivation. He sees models of altruism as having been more explanatory of "extraordinary heroism and...blood and organ donations" (p. 110). Through his research, Schervish has determined that the concept of selflessness "makes little theoretical or practical sense...precisely in the areas of life in which dedication and commitment of self-identification are so crucial" (p. 111). More discussion of Schervish's identification, other altruistic, and hybrid models of donor motivation occurs in Chapter II of this study.

### Communities of Participation

Schervish's model of identification includes eight determinant variables of charitable financial giving that are distilled from his research. One variable is communities of participation (Schervish, 1997). These are the formal (i.e., local organizations) and informal (i.e., extended family visitation) groups with which one has a relationship and finds one's identity. Some communities may require participation for membership (i.e., local bowling league) while others do not (i.e., political party). Participation may be by choice (i.e., volunteer at soup kitchen) or mandatory by virtue of life circumstance (i.e., P.T.A. of child's school). Being connected by community enables people to become "aware of needs" (p. 114) and provides opportunity to respond.

### Frameworks of Consciousness

Another variable is frameworks of consciousness, which are the beliefs and values (i.e., ideological, religious, or social) that influence one's commitment to a cause with similar beliefs and values (Schervish, 1997). In addition to inspired beliefs (i.e.,

Christian faith motivates financial tithing to church) and educated values (i.e., understanding of social injustice motivates giving to disadvantaged), consciousness can be shaped by experience (i.e., mother's premature death by cancer motivates support of cancer research).

### Invitations to Participate

Invitations to participate are the appeals for support one receives from charitable organizations (Schervish, 1997). Mail and telephone solicitations are mobilizing factors for smaller gifts but not for gifts that represent an increasingly higher percentage of donor income. However, personal invitation by people known to the donor prospect is a factor in generating these larger gifts.

### Discretionary Resources

Discretionary resources are those one perceives as available for charitable purposes (Schervish, 1997). In an economic sense, personal discretionary resources are objectively those available after housing, food, energy, transportation, and tax expenditures. In a charitable sense, however, discretionary resources are subject to the priority one places on charitable contribution versus entertainment, health care, or educational needs within one's family.

### Models and Experiences from One's Youth

Models and experiences from one's youth represent the interactions one had during childhood to "accrue a feel for the charitable impulse" (Schervish, 1997, p. 115). Schervish speaks predominantly of people one would interact with voluntarily or by



necessity during the formative years of one's moral development. These experiences help shape one's communities of participation and frameworks of consciousness.

### Urgency and Effectiveness

Urgency and effectiveness address a donor's perception of the impact of a timely response to an appeal (Schervish, 1997). News of tragedy, whether to individuals or through large-scale events for which provision of support is not readily available, motivates response. Schervish comments that such news triggers a "sense and [response] to the realization, 'There but for fortune go I'" (1997, p. 115). Coupled to this motivation is the notion that the donor has the capacity to make a meaningful financial response. "Compassion fatigue" (p. 116) is a concept that addresses the diminishing returns donors begin to believe their gifts can make when such repeated appeals are received.

### Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics represent the personal and contextual dimensions of an individual. Personal characteristics include income, "age, education, gender, and race" (Schervish, 1997, p. 116). Contextual, or background, characteristics are those that address aspects of one's locale, such as where one works and whether one owns a home (p. 116). While they lack "explanatory substance" (p. 116) and often serve simply as control variables in research, Schervish notes that demographic characteristics "represent important underlying causal dynamics" (p. 116) to donor motivation.

### Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards

Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are the satisfactions "that accrue to individuals who are already active in philanthropy" and help "explain the intensity of people's

philanthropic commitment” (p. 116). Expressions of appreciation by the supported organization, relationships with others who are also involved, and engagement with the programs and outcomes of the supported organization enable this motivation.

In his research, Schervish has found many of these variables to be interrelated. Frameworks of consciousness find at least some of their form from models and experiences from one’s youth and demographic characteristics. These frameworks help shape the communities of participation in which one chooses to participate. Schervish finds that these two variables, frameworks of consciousness and communities of participation, “almost always occur together” (1997, p. 114). Furthermore, invitations to participate “largely [occur] within existing communities of participation and appeals to existing frameworks of consciousness” (Schervish, 1997, p. 114). In addition to their connection to communities of participation and frameworks of consciousness, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards shape perceptions of discretionary resources and one’s capacity to effectively respond to an urgent appeal.

In the CIC study, respondents provide reasons why both major donors and alumni give. The mission statement and perceived beliefs and commitments of the organization were ranked first for major donors and second for alumni (Miller, 2001, p. 96). People give where they see an alignment of their values reflected in an organization. Loyalty, gratitude, and love for college were ranked first for alumni, fourth for major donors (p. 96). For some alumni, giving may be purely motivated by general fondness and nostalgia for alma mater. Others may wish to make an investment in the “margin of excellence” or “accessibility” they enjoyed as students as a way of saying “thank you.” Relationships

with leadership and personal contact were ranked second for major donors and fifth for alumni (p. 96). It is easier tossing a written appeal in the trash than refusing the solicitation of a person sitting across from you. Conversely, personal interaction allows much greater understanding of what a gift might mean to the organization and to the donor than a static letter.

A primary limitation in the CIC study is that it reflects the perceptions of CIC member respondents about their donors, not those of the donors, themselves. Brooks (2005), however, surveys alumnae and non-alumnae who have given to CCCU institutions. She finds that trust in leadership, loyalty to institution, giving to the next generation, and desire to make an impact are the four most important reasons, in order, that women in her study give (p. 265).

Schervish outlines a conceptual framework of motivations to give based on self identification. The models and experiences from our youth, along with our demographic characteristics, help establish the frameworks of our values and beliefs. These values and beliefs affect the communities in which we participate today and color our perception of the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that come from giving. However, being invited to give, understanding the urgency and effectiveness of our giving, and sensing we have discretionary resources to give become bottom-line variables that move us closer to the transaction of giving.

The CIC study found alignment of values most important to major donors and “giving back” most important to alumni. As described, these respectively reflect a large extent of Schervish’s frameworks of consciousness (on the basis of shared values) and

communities of participation (on the basis of giving where you are or have been). Brooks' response of trust in leadership fits Schervish's frameworks of consciousness, presuming trust may be implied to mean shared values. Her loyalty to institution clearly aligns with Schervish's communities of participation. Brooks' (2005) enabling the next generation could be connected to either Schervish's intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (presuming the motivation comes from ongoing support) or communities of participation (helping the next generation from one's "community" succeed). Brooks' desiring to see impact clearly fits Schervish's urgency and effectiveness of giving (the difference one's gift makes) but could also apply to intrinsic and extrinsic rewards if motivation is increased by an ongoing understanding of gift impact.

#### Cultivating Alumni and Major Donor Giving

Definitions of alumni are contextually specific to the institution from which they come. Degreed alumni are clearly those who completed the requirements and graduated from a particular educational program. But non-degreed alumni are former students who did not complete a degree but are included or invited to be members of the institution's alumni constituency. Many institutions regard those who completed a term (12 quarter or semester credit hours) to be eligible for membership.

Because alumni represent a significant factor in advancing an institution's external agenda, which include reputation and funding, there can be value in including those who did not receive degrees as alumni. These individuals may still embrace the values of the institution enough to participate in advancing the institution's external

agenda. But if they do not, particularly when it comes to raising gift income, alumni participation rates may suffer, affecting institutional reputation.

As with alumni, major gift amounts are relative to an institution's fund-raising context. Factors affecting this definition include budget for major gift staffing and programming and the distribution of gifts and prospects specific to an institution. Kelly defines it as the threshold where a current gift or pledge equals or exceeds \$10,000 (Kelly, 1998, p. 476). Hodge differentiates between annual and capital giving. For annual giving, major gifts are those "that constitute 1 to 5 percent [or more]" of the top gifts in that category; for capital projects, the proportion of gifts is smaller and range is tighter, from 0.5% to 1% of all capital gifts (Hodge, 2003, p. 89). Dunlop (2000) classifies gifts in three different stages. Those in Dunlop's conceptually developed transitional, or second, stage of philanthropy represent the entry point of major gifts (Hodge, 2003, p. 90). These gifts are larger (10-25 times) and less frequent than what are often considered annual gifts in Dunlop's transactional stage (p. 90). In her recent study of women who support evangelical Christian higher education, Brooks defines a major gift as cumulative donations to an organization of \$500 or more during a three-year time period (2005, p. 9). Brooks' definition incorporates a dimension of time, also implied by Kelly's notion of "pledge." Thus, major gifts can be both one-time transactions as well as accumulated contributions to a single organization over a relatively short period of time.

What determines a prospective major donor is his or her financial capacity and inclination to give to a specific cause (Hodge, 2003, p. 91). Inclination also relates to

one's capacity to be charitable. An attribute of development officers is their ability to discern "wealthy individuals who are spiritual and committed to making the world a better place" (p. 92). Not everyone is motivated this way, and an effort expended on those who are not might be considered wasted.

In a major gift context, relationship building involves interpersonal contact by an organizational representative. According to Hodge (2003), Garber notes that development officers of an organization are "agents of change," responsible for articulating an organization's mission and relating it to the philanthropic values of a prospective major-gift donor. They are to develop an "ownership position" (p. 92) within major-gift prospects. This is accomplished through intentional cultivation tasks. These tasks are carried out by the roles of an organizational visionary, a vision transformer, and a relationship developer (p. 95). The organizational visionary is "a leader who brings the mission [of an organization] to life for benefactors" (p. 95). The vision transformer is a staff member responsible for advancing "the mission through definable steps and acts" (p. 95). The relationship developer is the assigned development officer who possesses the interpersonal and negotiation skill to precipitate funding of the vision.

One intentional cultivation task is examining the values of prospective major-gift donors. What is important in their life now and what do they eventually wish to be their legacy? Answers to this and the many questions that are rooted to it are typically revealed only through trusted relationships and require permission to enter (Hodge, 2003, p. 97). As information is collected, a donor profile is constructed. In addition to the major-gift officer, members of the organization's board, administrative leadership, and

program staff who have interaction with the donor prospect may contribute information to the profile. Because of the trusted nature of such information, consent to this process is often synonymous with consent to be cultivated for a major gift.

Another cultivation task is to pursue “step” gifts from the prospective donor (Hodge, 2003, p. 98). This allows the organization to prove its ability to handle gifts of the donor and reveal the impact of the donor’s gifts and, ultimately, the organization’s alignment of values with those of the donor. As the organization’s mission and values are “owned” by the prospective major-gift donor, pursuit of a major-gift proposal may ensue.

If the organization’s mission and values have been effectively vested in the prospect, transition to the stage of a major-gift proposal is relatively seamless. Keys to successful proposal consideration include ensuring all decision makers for the proposal are “at the table” for discussion (Hodge, 2003, p. 99). Furthermore, the proposal must clearly specify the amount of the requested gift, how the gift will be recognized, and a plan for reporting the impact of the gift after it has been made (p. 99).

Alumni, whether degreed or not, represent the base of support for an institution. Their gifts of money and advocacy represent the margin of survival for some, margin of excellence for others. Major donor prospects are the relative few who can bring substantial, and occasionally transformative, impact upon an organization. Engaging such people involves intentional steps that build commitment to the organization’s cause through awareness and involvement activities. As the organization’s mission and reality is “owned” by the prospect, inviting his or her financial involvement becomes natural.

### Biblically-Inspired Fund Development

Two of Bebbington's four characteristics of Evangelicalism, activism and Biblicism, have direct implication for the practice of fund development in the context of this study. As noted earlier, activism is the expression of the gospel in effort; Biblicism is a particular regard for the Bible (Bebbington, 1992, p. 3). In an evangelical fund-raising context, it can be argued that the gospel account of Christ, informed by the Bible, ought to be evident in fund-raising activity if the practice is to have integrity with the beliefs espoused by evangelical organizations and their representative fund developers.

One dimension of civil society that finds its foundation in religious truth is the notion of trust. Mathew 5:37 in the Bible explains that one's "yes" and "no" ought to be what they simply intend and nothing more; our word is our bond. Charitable organizations seek to build this trust with prospective donors by subscribing to various codes of ethics and conduct. The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) is an association that provides seven operational and financial standards by which member organizations must adhere. Over 2,000 evangelical organizations are members (ECFA website); 20 of the 105 CCCU member institutions are also members of ECFA (cross-reference of membership lists).

The ECFA standards include a doctrinal statement affirming an evangelical Christian faith commitment, board and audit committee specifications, audited financial statements, use of resources for the exempt purposes of the organization, financial disclosure, rules for conflicts of interest, and standards of fund raising (ECFA, 2007, pp. 2-3). The only standard outlined with detailed description in the ECFA Standards and



Practices is fund raising. This description includes truthfulness in external communication, appeals that set realistic donor expectations, use of gifts that reflect donor intent, fund raising for purposes related to the organization's primary purpose, expressing appropriate gift value when incentives, premiums, and gifts-in-kind are involved, deferring financial advice of planned giving to family and professional advisors, disallowing commission compensation, disallowing the designation of tax-deductible gifts for personal benefit, disallowing officers to receive royalties from vendor products and services, and commitment to acting in the best interests of the donor (pp. 3-4).

The fund-raising standards of ECFA seek truthfulness in practice. These are similar to the "Donor Bill of Rights," developed by CASE, the Association of Healthcare Professionals (AHP), Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), and the American Association of Fundraising Counsel (AAFRC) in 1993, which include "disclosure, social responsibility, two-way communication, truth, and interdependency" (Kelly, 1998, p. 307) as ethical mandates of each respective organization's members. It appears no tangible difference exists in the standards of fund raising between evangelical and secular organizations.

Citing the same "Donor Bill of Rights" to which Kelly refers, Jeavons and Basinger (2000) argue that the document represents a minimalist, no harm approach to a fund-raising process that "tends to be utilitarian before it is humane or spiritual" (p. 4). Jeavons and Basinger stipulate that fund raising among Christians ought to "spur their spiritual growth" (p. 4) as much as generate resources for their cause. "It is rooted in the

Gospel vision that goes beyond respecting one's neighbor to loving one's neighbor" (p.

4). How this form of evangelical "activism" is expressed in fund-raising practice is addressed in Chapter Two.

### Fund-Raising Issues

In a more competitive charitable environment where the time of major gift prospects is equal or greater in value to their money, it is more difficult than ever to direct one's attention to the merits of an institution's cause. Alumni of an institution may highly regard their alma mater, but they are also inclined to support causes within their local community where they can more easily see the impact of their philanthropy. In the case of evangelical higher education, it is believed many individuals interpret the role of Christian higher education to be outside the role of the church, and thus beyond a biblical tithe. How does one's understanding of evangelical Christian higher education affect his or her motivation to support its work in relation to the church and other parachurch organizations?

So much is invested into the work of fund development, particularly major gifts, because of its relative payoff and efficiency. It is often cited that 90% of an organization's funds come from 10% of its donors. And that trend is moving in the direction of more gifts coming from even fewer donors. What are the activities that constitute major-gift fund development? In what ways does the relationship between a prospective donor and an evangelical Christian institution of higher learning really impact the motivation of those donors who give? How might this relationship negatively affect those who choose not to give?

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of the relationship that evangelical Christian institutions of higher education maintain with selected alumni who are major donors to their alma mater. Furthermore, this study examines how the process of developing this relationship may motivate or hinder alumni to make a major gift to the institution.

### Research Questions

In light of the preceding purpose, the following are questions this examination pursues:

1. What processes do evangelical institutions employ to engage selected alumni for the purpose of encouraging a major financial donation to their alma mater? What institutional strategies are identified for each engagement process?
2. What factors do alumni identify that would motivate them to provide a major financial gift to their evangelical alma mater? What factors motivate them not to give?
3. What are alumni perceptions of their evangelical alma mater's ability to build relationships with alumni that motivate them to contribute a major gift?

### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research, the terms listed below are defined as follows:

- Evangelical Christian College or University: An institution that demonstrates a commitment to "Christ-centered" education as determined by its

membership within the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU).

- Major Gift: This is typically defined by institutional context. For the sake of this study, a major gift will be defined as a one-time gift or pledge of \$1,000 or more.
- Major Gift Activities: All institutional communication that specifically intends to either cultivate or elicit gifts from prospective major-donor alumni. These include one-to-one interactions, group events, websites, e-mail, brochures, and publications.
- Institutional Identity: An institution's ethos that is manifest in its culture, portrayed in its community, and perceived by its external publics.

#### Significance of Study

This study explores institutional factors which positively or negatively impact the motivation of alumni donors of CCCU institutions to give major gifts to their alma mater. The first research question of the study addresses the activities and strategies of major-gift programs within evangelical institutions. Understanding not only activities, but also the intentions behind them illuminates assumptions of practice that may or may not be effective.

The second research question of the study addresses factors alumni identify that would motivate them to provide or not provide a major financial gift to their alma mater. How the inductive, descriptive responses of prospective donor participants align with

current views of major-donor and alumni motivations and behavior will further shape understanding of motivations and behavior within an evangelical Christian context.

The third research question of the study addresses alumni perceptions of the impact and/or effectiveness of institutional activities on their motivation to provide a major financial donation to the institution. If activities themselves do not express the ethos of the institution, they may violate the very goodwill the institution is seeking through them.

This study will further refine the meaning of Kelly's (1998) four models of fund raising through an evangelical Christian higher education context. It will provide qualitative, case-study data that will help inform ethical and productive major gift fund-raising practice at least among evangelical colleges and universities.

#### Overview of Study

This research involves three CCCU institutions in a case-study design. It consists of interviews of development staff and administrative leadership and review of print and electronic communications. Furthermore, interview data are collected from three major-donor alumni. Data are coded and analyzed, guided by both Kelly's framework of fund raising (1998) and themes on biblically-inspired fund raising that emerge from Jeavons and Basinger's 2000 study, Growing Givers' Hearts.

CHAPTER TWO  
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The voluntary sector of the U.S. economy has grown exponentially in the past 50 years. As it has, its scope of service has transcended religion, education, health, private social welfare, and foreign aid to include the arts, environment/animal welfare, “public-society benefit,” scientific and social science research, and community and private foundations.

Slightly less than 10% of all voluntary sector support is directed toward higher education. While individual support is significant for higher education, it appears less than individual giving to the voluntary sector as a whole. While fewer alumni seem to be giving more dollars, information technology enables institutions to record an ever-larger “alumni of record,” resulting in the fact that many may not give even if an appeal reaches them.

Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) institutions in the U.S. are distinct from other institutions in higher education today, even other religious institutions, because of their particular evangelical missions. While relatively insignificant in total enrollment, CCCU institutions have enjoyed substantially larger rates of growth in enrollment than religiously-affiliated institutions or higher education as a whole.

Alumni, whether degreed or not, represent the base of support for an institution. Their gifts of money and advocacy represent the margin of survival for some and margin of excellence for others. Major donors are the relative few who can bring substantial, and occasionally transformative, impact upon an organization. Engaging such people involves intentional steps that build commitment to the organization's cause through awareness and involvement activities. As the organization's mission and reality are "owned" by the donor, inviting his or her financial involvement becomes natural.

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of the relationship that evangelical Christian institutions of higher education maintain with selected alumni who are major donors to their alma mater. Furthermore, this study examines how the process of developing this relationship may motivate or hinder alumni to make a major gift to the institution.

This chapter reviews literature pertaining to five discreet areas. The first, philanthropy in American higher education, provides an overview of giving in America in general and higher education in particular. The second, factors influencing or motivating alumni and major donor giving, critiques research conducted on motivational factors that influence alumni and/or major donor giving in higher education contexts. Models of fund raising addresses two particular conceptual frameworks related to fund development: Kelly's (1998) four models of fund raising and Grunig and Repper's (1992) situational theory of publics. The fourth area, fund-raising practice, relates to strategic planning, management and leadership, fund-raising methods, prospect engagement, and accountability and ethics. Lastly, the evangelical context will address

the specific sub-cultural realm in which this study seeks to understand alumni major-gift donor motivation.

### History of Giving to American Higher Education

#### New World Generosity

The uniqueness of American philanthropy is not that it was born here, but that it took root. “So prodigiously,” says Bremner, “that [philanthropy] early assumed a stature and significance all its own” (1983, p. 36). European settlers of the New World came from a land that was experiencing one of its great periods of philanthropy to one in which each individual hoped to “establish communities that would be *better* than, instead of like or different from, the ones they had known at home” (Bremner, 1983, p. 36, italics in original). “Better” necessarily implied, among other things, a cooperative and altruistic spirit.

Bremner (1983) notes that in his book, Democracy in America, Alexis de Tocqueville posits that the creation of voluntary associations represents the capacity of individuals of a democratic society to preserve their independence from government rule and equality among each other and accomplish the necessary tasks of civil life. But social inclination to form associations of numerous individuals that have any power is unlikely. To his astonishment, de Tocqueville experienced this phenomenon through an alcoholic temperance movement in the United States. He commented that those with a common opinion about an issue seem to find one another and combine. “From that moment they are no longer isolated men, but a power seen from afar, whose actions serve for an example and whose language is listened to” (p. 56). “Nothing, in my opinion, is



more deserving of our attention than the intellectual and moral associations of America” (p. 56).

This spirit, however, found different expressions of purpose that influence the plurality of American philanthropy today (Bremner, 1983). Early expressions were more communal than individualistic in nature. John Winthrop reflected the Puritan ethos of his time in the sermon he delivered while crossing the Atlantic in 1630, “A Model of Christian Charity.” Winthrop viewed disparities in wealth as divine imbalances where those with more had responsibility to be unified through charity with those possessing less. Such charity would generally bless God by obeying one’s covenant with him and man with a sense of community among his neighbors. William Penn, the Quaker who founded Pennsylvania, also saw class distinctions as ordained by God. But Penn and the Quakers saw more parity between obedience to God for the nation’s own sake and to his command to love the “brotherhood of man” (p. 38) in their view of stewardship.

The covenantal obligation of performing charitable deeds was a Puritan virtue that Cotton Mather would later expound upon in his most popular of 450 writings, *Essays To Do Good*, published in 1710 (Bremner, 1983). Where Winthrop emphasized the appeal of doing good for the sake of community, Mather focused on the reward and honor that comes to the individual, something he knew from considerable experience. Even so, Mather’s greatest contribution to philanthropy was recognizing the power of organizing individual efforts through “benevolent enterprise” (p. 40).

### Early Philanthropy in Higher Education

American higher education was inaugurated with the founding of its first college in Newtowne, Massachusetts in 1636 (Rudolph, 1990). Not long after, in 1638, came the first charitable gift to help advance the mission of this colonial college: 779 English pounds and a personal library from the estate of the Reverend John Harvard (McCown, 2000). Hence, Harvard College was born. Three years later, in 1641, William Hibbens, Hugh Peter, and Thomas Weld, three clergymen from Boston, set out for London to solicit support for Harvard (Worth, 1993). What were the results of this first fund-raising campaign? Weld stayed on in London, Peter “was hanged for crimes committed under British law,” (p. 24) but Hibbens returned with 500 English pounds and a request to send literature back to England to tell of Harvard’s story (McCown, 2000).

Because the colonies were relatively poor, England “was the only reliable source of significant philanthropy” (Rudolph, 1990, p. 178). Nevertheless, the benevolent spirit found in English tradition followed many Englishmen to the New World. John Harvard and Elihu Yale were the first, and among the few, to provide substantial sums to the colonial colleges (1990). During the second half of the nineteenth century, however, single benefactors were responsible for creating “full-blown” institutions, including “Vassar, Smith, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Chicago, and Wellesley” (p. 178). Wealth generated in the emergent American economy was the basis for these and other institutions like them that followed.

Colleges depended upon charitable support from the masses to fund their programs (Rudolph, 1990). One popular approach was the subscription. Subscriptions

were typically offered when an institution was being founded or on the brink of financial peril. They “permitted an appeal to local pride or to some special interest – perhaps sectarian – and it had the rather important effect of suggesting that the support of higher education was a popular responsibility, regardless of one’s wealth” (p. 182). One could pledge aid in the form of goods, services, or cash. During the colonial period, more corn than cash was subscribed, and a bad crop would preclude pledge fulfillment. Many of the names on subscription lists “belonged to God-fearing farmers for whom a college was of perhaps no immediate value, but for whom the *idea* of a college was of transcending importance” (p. 182, italics in original).

Many denominational colleges were founded in the early 1800s and many of them failed (Rudolph, 1990). In financial desperation, a popular vehicle for struggling institutions was the concept of a perpetual scholarship, similar to today’s Section 529 college savings plans. “In an effort to collect funds to erect buildings or augment endowments, many colleges authorized their agents to sell at a set price – generally in the neighborhood of five hundred dollars – a perpetual scholarship to the college, entitling the owner to free tuition for one person in perpetuity” (p. 190). The trouble with this concept was that money collected was designated toward outstanding debt, not endowed for the future tuition obligation the college had now entered. Schools that survived this period and utilized scholarship revenue for other purposes had to bear the financial weight that tuition-free students brought to their colleges.

A perpetuated myth of early American higher education was the notion of the privately endowed independent college. Quoting Hall, Kelly (1998) notes that “the

colonial colleges were state enterprises, and they were supported primarily by government funds until the early nineteenth century” (p.138). Harvard, which was established by the Massachusetts General Court, received over one hundred appropriations from the Court before 1789 because it “clearly was not capable of taking care of itself” (Rudolph, 1990, p.185). Many colleges were incapable of sustaining themselves from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century through the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Williams College is a telling anecdote from Rudolph. “The college would probably not have survived its first fifty years without the \$50,000 which the General Court injected into the struggling institution between 1793 and 1823” (p. 187). After the Civil War, however, “the colleges found new means of support among their alumni and among a crop of especially affluent millionaire benefactors; only then were they prepared to recognize what their unavailing petitions to the state legislatures had made clear to many others: the day of public support had ended, the private college had emerged” (p. 189).

#### Fund Raising Becomes Intentional

With the twentieth century came the first systematic approaches to fund raising. “Fund raising before the twentieth century was generally amateur and personal, a transaction between two individuals, with no role for organization, strategy, or professional managers” (Worth, 1993, p. 25). Kelly (1998) notes Cutlip’s reference to early efforts being no more sophisticated than “personal begging appeals” (p. 139). Until World War I, “agents” of colleges would be hired to raise funds, sometimes for a percentage of gifts raised. The most famous of which was Frederick Courtenay Barber. Barber began the first fund-raising consulting firm in 1913. Many firms that followed

understood percentage-based fund raising to be in bad taste and sought to distance themselves from Barber. In turn, 1919 became known as the date when fund-raising consultants of reputation were established.

While formal alumni associations, traced back to the early 1800s, were formed “as a ‘living endowment’ for the school...the most significant revolution in fund raising was to come from outside higher education in the first decade of the twentieth century” (Worth, 1993, p. 25). Worth’s reference is to YMCA executives Lyman L. Pierce and Charles Sumner Ward. Pierce’s campaign for a \$300,000 YMCA building in Washington D.C. stalled in 1905, and he called Ward, regarded for his fund-raising success, to come assist. With Pierce’s consent, “Ward insisted on a carefully prepared list of prospects and showed prospective donors the names of those who already had given” (p. 26). But this concept was hardly new, as Benjamin Franklin had provided similar advice more than a century earlier:

In the first place I advise you to apply to all those whom you know will give something; next to those whom you are uncertain whether they will give anything or not, and show them the list of those who have given; and lastly, do not neglect those whom you are sure will give nothing, for in some of them you may be mistaken (p. 25).

Ward built upon Franklin’s strategy with visual devices. The “campaign clock” or “thermometer” (Worth, 1993, p. 26) focused prospective donor attention on the campaign goal, progress toward that goal, and the timeline within which it needed to be reached. Ward applied these same principles for the first time to higher education at the University of Pittsburgh in 1914, which sought to raise \$3 million.

Ward eventually left the YMCA and became a fund-raising consultant (Kelly, 1998). The year 1919 began a period where consultants were brought into a nonprofit organization to run a more sophisticated fund-raising campaign. Consultants would provide campaign fund-raising services to client institutions through “resident managers.” These individuals planned, organized, and executed the campaign, utilizing volunteer solicitors, namely the college president and board of trustees. When the campaign was complete, they would move to another client institution. This period continued until 1965 when professional fund-raising practitioners began to be staffed in earnest at colleges and universities.

The activity of consultants was propelled by several events that helped formalize fund raising for nonprofits in general and colleges in particular (Kelly, 1998). In 1913, both the Federal income tax was imposed and the American Alumni Council (AAC) was formed. Several years later, in 1917, Federal tax law made provisions for deductions of charitable contributions. During that same year, the American College Public Relations Association (ACPRA) was formed.

#### The Professionalization of Fund Development

Neither AAC or ACPRA members were formally involved in fund raising; that duty often fell to the institutional president and board members as noted previously (Kelly, 1998). But both groups claimed fund raising to be within their respective domains. From a 1958 conference of the two associations came a report known as the “Greenbrier Report,” named after the resort where both associations met in West Virginia. This report lent direction to the organization and coordination of alumni

relations, fund raising, and public relations activities known corporately today as the function of institutional advancement. In 1974, AAC and ACPRA united to create the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), which represents the three professional realms of institutional advancement today.

The American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel (AAFRC), founded in 1935, is a representative organization of the top fund-raising consultants (Kelly, 1998).

Recognizing the increase in professional fund-raising staff at higher education institutions, Kelly (1998) notes from Gurin that AAFRC member Bowen and Gurin in 1965 began a shift from resident campaign management to part-time campaign counsel. While many colleges and universities had internal staff directing annual fund campaigns in the 1930s, campaign efforts were largely directed by consultants until the 1960s. Resident campaign managers were fading because staff at major institutions had been strengthened in their ability to carry out the daily tasks of managing a campaign. This trend began for private colleges and universities after World War II and carried over to public institutions in the mid-1970s.

From the end of World War I to 1969, incentives for charitable contribution had only been enhanced with little understanding of how nonprofit organizations operated and with no government oversight (Kelly, 1998). The Tax Reform Act of 1969 focused on stricter reporting and operating standards for both private foundations and 501(c)(3) organizations and represented a new era of increased accountability. The National Commission on Private Philanthropy and Public Needs, also known as the Filer Commission, was established in 1973 by the leaders of charitable organizations to help

provide information about the arena in which these organizations operated. The Filer Commission laid the groundwork for two private organizations that would become known for their efforts to promote and disseminate research related to the nonprofit sector, the Program On Non-Profit Organizations (PONPO), established in 1977, and Independent Sector, established in 1980 (p. 154). Independent Sector has since become “the [third] sector’s leading voice on national issues” (p. 154). Making research broadly available has enabled both public accountability of the voluntary sector and the sector’s ability to develop funds with less dependence upon consultant proprietary information.

Today, higher education is as dependent as ever on private support. Having grown through intentional private funding efforts and government support during the twentieth century, higher education is adapting to a smaller margin of government support. In turn, public institutions are beginning to resemble private institutions in their pursuit of charitable dollars. Murray (2005) notes that the University of Michigan received 70 percent of its funding from the state of Michigan in 1965; in 2005, state appropriations dropped to 10 percent. With ever larger institutional fund-raising campaigns being conducted by more institutions, the competition for charitable resources in the higher education segment of the voluntary sector has never been greater.

Philanthropy in American higher education was born from a spirit of communal generosity. This generosity was fueled by an understanding that the grace of God and humanity, enabled by a democratic and free society, required all who enjoyed that grace to perpetuate it. Early settlers understood the importance of higher education and invested in it, including government bodies. Many colleges were formed and



subsequently failed to become financially viable following the American Revolution. Those that survived and those created during the post-Civil War era enjoyed the bounty of Industrial tycoons who enabled the expansion and transformation of the American economy. At the dawn of the twentieth century, fund raising became more intentional in higher education with the introduction of consultants and alumni associations. As higher education proliferated to a larger scale after World War II, fund raising professionalized within institutions. Today, higher education fund development has become more sophisticated as more “privately-financed public” colleges and universities compete for charitable dollars.

One area in which fund development has grown in sophistication is its understanding of donor motivation. This complex phenomenon demands attention to ensure colleges and universities develop programs to effectively engage their donor constituencies.

#### Factors Influencing or Motivating Alumni and Major Donor Giving

Differing paradigms exist for explaining motivation behind making a financial contribution to charity. In a simplistic sense, financial giving can be viewed as a purely altruistic act. One example is where an individual has a specific financial need, for example a medical procedure or rent, and cash for the exact amount of that need is found in his or her mailbox. Years may go by with it still not known who performed the act of kindness; and the gift is not tax-deductible because a qualified charitable organization did not receive it. These gifts are identified through personal anecdotes but not through newspapers or organizational annual reports. On the other hand, one does learn through

newspapers or organizational annual reports of multimillion dollar gifts or pledges that are made to an organization. Is one of these gifts motivated by altruism and the other by self interest? Is motivation this simple?

Motivation for charitable financial giving belies the preceding dichotomy by its complexity. Motives for giving generally include the interests of both the self and others. This notion is captured in the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” The action one takes, or doesn’t take, with others has repercussions for him or herself. This aligns with Gouldner’s (1960) social “norm of reciprocity,” which Kelly (1998) cites as “a universal component of all moral codes” (p. 45). Kelly (1998) posits that “egoism, as defined by Gouldner, is a ‘salient (but not exclusive) concern with the satisfaction of one’s own needs.’ But, he explained, ‘there is an altruism in egoism, made possible through reciprocity’” (p. 45).

Motivation for charitable giving holds its theoretical roots in the social sciences. Neoclassical microeconomics suggests that individuals and corporate entities make decisions on the basis of achieving ends that maximize utility (Weintraub, 1985). Steinberg (1997) adapts this notion to charity by coalescing it with the concept of altruism: Those who give still seek to maximize utility, but find it in the knowledge of the good they have done for others instead of tangible personal rewards. Social exchange theory presumes utility maximization, but focuses on the relationship between those engaged in exchange and the rewards that each party seeks (Halfpenny, 1999). In contrast, equity theory posits that distress from an inequitable relationship undermines

utility maximization (Walster & Walster, 1978). In turn, parties with greater economic value find their reward by redressing imbalance by giving to those with less.

Absent from the preceding theories is a descriptive function of meaning.

According to the theory of social interactionism, meaning comes from interaction with the world around oneself and one's social identity within it (Blumer, 1969). Halfpenny applies social interactionism to the realm of donor behavior, and suggests that interaction with social and physical environment determines whether one will accept or reject the role of donor (1999).

Social identity theory is the basis for Schervish's model of identification he uses to research charitable gift motivation. As noted in Chapter I, Schervish's (1997) eight determinant variables of charitable giving provide a descriptive framework of those mobilizing factors that influence giving. Consistent with Kelly (1998), these variables are constructed from a theoretical understanding that charitable financial giving is associated more with a model of self identification than heroic altruism. These variables effectively categorize the various factors that motivate charitable giving, and thus are used in this section to present previous research findings on alumni and major donor motivation.

### Communities of Participation

As will be demonstrated, it is not surprising that many studies find connections between alumni and their alma mater to be significant to their giving to their undergraduate institution. This concept relates well to Schervish's communities of

participation determinant variable of charitable giving. These communities are those groups with which one has a relationship and finds his or her identity.

Communities were differentiated in studies between the identity one has had as a student and as an alumnus or alumnae. Thomas found that social involvement, campus leadership, and participation in academic activities when alumni were students all significantly distinguish donors from non-donors (2005). Hoyt (2004) also found general student involvement to be significant for donors. Additional variables of significance from student experience include college major (Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995; Hueston, 1992; Okunade & Berl, 1997; Wunnava & Lauze, 2001), language school attendance (Wunnava & Lauze, 2001), participation in social organizations (Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995; Okunade, Wunnava, & Walsh, 1994), contacts with faculty members (Shadoian, 1989), and enrollment for graduate work (Okunade, Wunnava, & Walsh, 1994; Taylor & Martin, 1995). Excepting college major, all the preceding variables suggest a greater degree of engagement with the institution when alumni were students, consistent with Schervish's hypothesis of communities of participation that involvement shapes identity, which in turn shapes proclivity to give.

Gallo and Hubschman's 2003 study focused on relationship between alumni satisfaction scores on the ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey, participation in alumni programming, and financial giving. Findings naturally indicate that higher alumni satisfaction generally correlated to both greater alumni program participation and financial giving (2003). Specific areas of alumni connection that have been found to have a significant relationship to alumni giving include general alumni satisfaction (Hoyt,

2004), loyalty to college (Brooks, 2005; Miller, 2001), gratitude and love for college (Miller, 2001), restricted gifts as indicators of gratitude (Burt, 1989; King 2005), volunteering for an alma mater (Wunnava & Lauze, 2001), number of postgraduate campus visits (Shadoian, 1989), reading publications (Shadoian, 1989; Taylor & Martin, 1995), contacts with faculty members after graduation (Shadoian, 1989), relationships with leadership (Miller, 2001), general personal contacts (Miller, 2001), and general postgraduate involvement and activity (Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995; Miracle, 1997; Oglesby, 1991; Sun, 2005; Taylor & Martin, 1995). Several of these variables are attributed to attitude, such as gratitude and love for college. Many are connected to behavior, such as relationships with leadership, which may have a causal relationship with attitude. Attitudes can be shaped by college experience, but also by models from one's youth and frameworks of consciousness.

#### Frameworks of Consciousness

Frameworks of consciousness are the beliefs and values that influence one's commitment to a cause with similar beliefs and values. When beliefs and values are developed while enrolled as college students, an even closer affinity between the institution and its alumni can be created. These include common religious beliefs with the institution (Lindale & Winship, 1992), connection to a special interest group on campus (Taylor & Martin, 1995), general belief in the institution (Foley, 2003; Miller, 2001), winning season and TV appearances of the college's teams (Grimes & Chressanthis, 1994), support of the college's resource utilization (Harrison, 1995), willingness to recommend the institution (Okunade & Berl, 1997), impact of

“organizational legend” on alumni identification and support (Clark, 1999; Mael & Ashforth, 1992), trust in leadership (Brooks, 2005), and affinity with the institution’s mission (King, 2005; Miller, 2001). Common values, belief in an institution’s mission, success, operation, and integrity, and identification with an organizational hero are all reflected in the preceding studies.

Additional concepts in the literature relate to frameworks of consciousness. Burt (1989) infers that alumni donation may generally serve as an indicator of belief that increased resources affect education outcomes. Furthermore, Burt (1989) believes that unrestricted gifts may be indicators of support for the ideal of higher education. Clotfelter (2003) asserts two perceptions that govern gifts to private instead of public institutions. The first is that the opportunity for greater marginal impact on student quality is found in private institutions. The second is the belief that government is responsible for public education. Whether private or public, Winston (1999) finds institutional justification for the support of those students who are academically superior. As more efficient outputs, Winston argues, brighter students should receive greater subsidies. More revenue generated for merit subsidies of tuition could attract better students and produce better outputs, helping spiral upward institutional quality. Beliefs about investment in education have an impact on motivation to give.

### Invitations to Participate

Invitations to participate are appeals for support one receives from charitable organizations. Harrison found fund-raising efforts as a significant factor to alumni giving (1995). According to Hoyt (2004), level of solicitation had a particularly positive effect.

King (2005) found that giving was significant for some in his qualitative study on major gifts specifically when they were not asked to give. Many who felt this way were already significantly involved with the institution and knew its needs (2005). Not being asked implied institutional respect for this understanding and belief that the support these individuals could provide would come without pressure (2005). These studies suggest that invitations to participate are viewed as both implicit and explicit.

### Discretionary Resources

Discretionary resources are those one perceives are available for charitable purposes. Variables that directly relate to this concept include income (Belfield & Beney, 2000; Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995; Lindale & Winship, 1992; Taylor & Martin, 1995), wealth (Harrison, 1995), correlation of gift elasticity and income (Belfield & Beney, 2000; Yoo & Harrison, 1990), capacity to give (Hoyt, 2004), gifts to other religious organizations (2004), and growth-rate of donations correlating to age (Okunade, Wunnava, & Walsh, 1994; Olsen, Smith, & Wunnava, 1989) and income profile of donors (Olsen, Smith, & Wunnava, 1989). Proxies for discretionary resources include employment within the financial sector (Wunnava & Lauze, 2001), larger gifts from business school graduates (Okunade, Wunnava, & Walsh, 1994), presence of an economic recession (Hoyt, 2004), and stock market trends (Bristol, 1990). Leslie et al. (1983) suggest that charitable contributions to higher education were significantly related to business conditions. While corporate giving was higher during good economic conditions, personal giving was higher during bad economic conditions and when higher education was in need. Steinberg (1997) suggests that increases in marginal tax rate

lower both cost of donation and disposable income, each factor counteracting the effects of the other. Discretionary resources relate to microeconomic factors, such as personal income and wealth, as well as macroeconomic factors, like economic, stock market, and personal income tax conditions. Competition for discretionary resources, such as other charitable opportunities, also effect giving.

#### Models and Experiences from One's Youth

Models and experiences from one's youth represent the interactions one had during childhood that help cultivate giving. These include family ties to alma mater (Okunade & Berl, 1997), leadership (King, 2005), and modeling of giving (King, 2005). Family ties to alma mater can both be construed as demographic characteristics and also as a prior generational influence to giving. While leadership and modeling of giving are presumed to be by others from a previous generation, these influences could come from within existing communities of participation.

#### Urgency and Effectiveness

Urgency and effectiveness address a donor's perception of the impact of a timely response to an appeal. These include perpetuation of the institution (Foley, 2003), giving to the next generation (Brooks, 2005), desire to make an impact (2005), and perceived need (Hoyt, 2004; Miracle, 1997; Taylor & Martin, 1995). Halfpenny (1999) found that unconstrained donations are wealth generators when marginal value of gift to recipient is greater than marginal cost to donor, relating directly to Schervish's effectiveness argument. The smaller the cost-benefit ratio and timely the gift opportunity in the minds of donor prospects, the greater is the propensity to give.



### Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics represent the personal and contextual dimensions of an individual. These include gender (Belfield & Beney, 2000; Hueston, 1992), race (Hueston, 1992), age (Hoyt, 2004; Hueston, 1992), marital status (Belfield & Beney, 2000; Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995; Hueston, 1992), being the spouse of an alumnus (Hueston, 1992; Thomas, 2005), location (Hueston, 1992), distance from alma mater (Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995), residence in states with alumni chapters (Wunnava & Lauze, 2001), household attributes (Okunade & Berl, 1997), and years after graduation (Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995; Okunade & Berl, 1997; Thomas, 2005). It seems that being the spouse of an alumnus, being closer to one's alma mater, and residing in states with alumni chapters would all positively affect giving. However, demographic characteristics such as gender, race, age, marital status, location, household attributes, and years after graduation do not provide a clear sense of which responses in the respective categories would correlate to giving.

### Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards

Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are the satisfactions that come from giving and characterize why people give. These include supporting other charities (Oglesby, 1991), availability of matching gift accounts (Okunade & Berl, 1997), alumni seeking status (Coelho, 1985), self-interest (King, 2005), honoring of others (2005), charitable tax deductions (Feldstein & Taylor, 1976), past giving, and recency of donation (Lindale & Winship, 1992). Support of other charities, past giving, and recency of donation all exhibit an understanding of the value of charitable contribution. Tax deductions and

matching gift accounts are the “frosting on the cake” that encourages charitable support. Status and self-interest provide egotistical rewards; honoring of others could be considered the same in the context of self identification.

Some giving is driven by altruistic motives. But this is not the exclusive motive, and within the context of social identity theory, a complex, hybrid motivational model likely describes most charitable giving. Schervish’s (1997) eight determinant variables serve together as a useful framework for distilling the various motivational theories of giving. The next section focuses attention on various models of fund raising.

### Models of Fund Raising

#### Kelly’s Four Models of Fund Raising

Until 1989, empirical research on the practice of fund raising was practitioner oriented. Research balanced on presuppositions developed in practice and literature was dedicated to effectiveness, predicated on the anecdotes of those successful in the field. Nothing was done to tie practice to a theoretical base of a relevant discipline of study.

In 1989, Kathleen Kelly took a first step into this theoretical abyss. Kelly applied Grunig and Hunt’s four models of public relations to analyze fund-raising practice in the U.S. (1998). These models represent press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical constituent engagement. Within the context of systems theory, these models generally describe the dynamics of interdependence in organizations’ interactions with their environments. Kelly conducted two subsequent studies that empirically affirmed the models’ descriptive capacities and provided

explanation for organizations' model choices, providing further theoretical legitimacy for fund-raising practice (p. 155).

In the context of open-systems theory, Kelly's (1998) models represent a range of alternatives for adaptation of organizational mission vis-à-vis an organization's public environment. At one end, the press agency model propagandizes an organization, manipulating its public environment through emotive appeal while isolating itself from affective external influence. The public information model reduces the pathetic and increases the logical dimensions of persuasion, informing audiences of the charitable opportunity at hand. Two-way asymmetrical fund raising represents the first application of market research. Information is actually gathered from donor publics, but it is only used to increase the appeal of what the charitable organization is accomplishing, not to directly affect it. The two-way symmetrical model forms mutual understanding of mission through a strategic surrender of organizational autonomy in exchange for sustenance and socially-constructed identity. Donors have access to more information about the charitable organization and more influence upon what its identity ought to be. Kelly adapted these models from public relations scholar James Grunig, who used a similar rubric to theorize the direction (one-way and two-way) and intended effects (asymmetrical and symmetrical) of communication in the relationship between organizations and their various stakeholder publics (p. 155).

Following Kelly's work on two-way symmetrical interaction between non-profit organizations and their publics, Chung-Hoon (2005) studies the effects of the dynamics of both relational and structural embeddedness on enduring donor relationships in public

higher education. Chung-Hoon's donor-organizational integration model provides for relational embeddedness interaction and formality of structural interaction, explaining how increasing interactions with personal relationships and formal organizational operation and structure may result in greater strategic integration within an institution, and ultimately an enduring donor relationship.

Enduring donor relationships are evidenced by high degrees of personal relationships, economic interactions, social capital and personal commitment, significant personal integration into the formal structure and activities of the institution, and by high levels of trust (Chung-Hoon, 2005). Dyadic ties focus on relationships between individuals that are nested in a larger network of relationships. Understanding the strategic value of specific dyadic ties enables participants in a specific network of involvement to be more strategic in their relationship building efforts. These dyadic ties are often classified as personal, hollow, latent, isolated, functional, competency based, or full (Hite, 2003). Structural embeddedness refers to the multiple-levels of involvement in activities or relationships with others.

Hall (2002) conducts a descriptive study of trust variables found from development officers. Trust doesn't motivate gifts, but without it gifts will not occur. Factors influencing trust include mission, reputation, leadership, and common values. Officers build relationships through interpersonal skills, reliability, dependability, consistency, fiduciary responsibility (stewardship), knowledge of the institution and gifting process. Trust is built via communication that is personal, clear, timely, open, and increases donor knowledge of the institution.

Implicit in Kelly's two-way symmetrical model of fund raising is the notion of personal trust and relationship. Through it, a mutual understanding of both an organization and a donor's mission is achieved through which a just and ethical engagement of charitable investment can take place.

#### Grunig and Repper's Situational Theory of Publics

In the 1998 book Effective Fund-Raising Management, Kelly analyzes the relationship of theories "derived from such disciplines as management, sociology, psychology, and communication" to "time-tested principles of practitioners" to determine which truths and fallacies were dictating fund-raising practice (p. 324). In addition to the four models of fund raising, Kelly specifies a public relations theory that addresses donor perception and intended effects of communication. This includes Grunig and Repper's (1992) situational theory of publics (Kelly, 1998).

Grunig and Repper's (1992) situational theory of publics "explains how fund raisers effectively identify those donor publics with the highest probability of giving" (Kelly, 1998, p. 365). Conversely, it reinforces that there are donor publics who do not justify the expenditure of the scarce resources of a fund raiser. Three predictor variables Grunig and Repper (1992) outline in this theory are level of involvement, problem recognition, and constraint recognition. Level of involvement relates to one's connectedness "to a problem, issue, or opportunity involving an organization" (p. 364). Problem recognition relates to one's perception that a problem, issue, or opportunity is important. Constraint recognition relates to one's perception he or she can personally affect the problem, issue, or opportunity.

Grunig and Repper (1992) outline four outcome groups that describe the combination of these three variables: Active publics, aware publics, latent publics, and nonpublics (Kelly, 1998, p. 364). Active publics are comprised of those where involvement and problem recognition are high and constraint recognition is low. Aware publics are those where problem recognition is also high, but perception of constraints and involvement varies. Latent publics are those who are not involved, do not readily see a problem, and have not considered constraints. Nonpublics do not see a problem and have no involvement.

Those with high capacities for involvement and problem recognition and a low threshold of constraint for a charity's cause have the greatest ability to effectively engage with it. This becomes a beneficial framework for effectively identifying donor prospects and ought to be connected to a charity's purposes. Those meeting these criteria are worthy of two-way symmetrical prospect engagement. The next section addresses fund-raising practice.

#### Fund-Raising Practice

Rosso and Tempel note that "fund raising is the servant of philanthropy" (2003, p. 14). From this, they make claims concerning the role of the voluntary sector organization and the view of the fund raiser in practice. Before an appeal for funds will be successful, the organization needs to be clear in the mind of its prospective donors the purpose for its existence and its effective performance of that purpose. In addition to ensuring the mission is fulfilled and resources are effectively deployed, nonprofit organization board members are also responsible in ensuring resources are secured. The values, mission, and

goals of the organization must be present in and presented through the fund-raising function.

Gifts are given with no promise of material return. Therefore, the onus is upon the organization to return value in meaningful ways to the donor. Apology should never be part of a fund raiser's solicitation nor a prospective donor's response. If the organization's purpose and relevance are clear, it is perfectly appropriate to ask for support. Likewise, a donor gives as an expression of joy for the blessings in his or her life and the resonance with which the organization's mission has in his or her heart: Giving what he or she is able and chooses is his or her prerogative alone. "Indeed, fund raising is never an end in itself; it is purposive. It draws both its meaning and essence from the ends that are served: Caring, helping, healing, nurturing, guiding, uplifting, teaching, creating, preventing, advancing a cause, preserving values, and so forth" (p. 16).

Effective fund-raising practice involves strategic planning, management and leadership, employing effective fund-raising methods, engaging prospects, and exhibiting accountability and ethics. These dimensions of fund-raising practice are outlined below.

### Strategic Planning

Strategic funding issues for voluntary sector organizations include identifying organizational strengths and vulnerabilities, planning according to those strengths and vulnerabilities, developing a constituency for fund raising, and implementing an integrated development plan (Tempel, 2003c). Organizational strengths and vulnerabilities are found in a variety of dimensions. To survive, organizations need to

operate as open systems. This involves recognizing their role within the environments in which they operate and adapting to changing conditions. But change on the basis of enhancing fund-raising performance alone is dangerous because institutional mission can become marginalized. With organizational philosophy as a guide, one question to be asked is whether the organization is ready to raise funds. This is evidenced by its plan to function within its environment according to the role it envisions for that environment (2003c).

Furthermore, human resources, such as governing board, executive management, program and fund-raising officers, and volunteers need to be in place and each understands their respective roles for fund-raising success (Temple, 2003c). Sources of support beyond any fee-based funds, such as those from federal, state, and local government, corporations, foundations, associations, and individuals, must be identified for the fund-raising task. Fund-raising vehicles, gift-acceptance policies, fund-raising management, and the organization's ability to be accountable to its donors are all additional dimensions that determine an organization's strength and vulnerability as it approaches its fund-raising goals (2003c).

Two vulnerabilities for which organizations need to plan include changes to federal tax incentives and the restricted giving nature of younger donors (Temple, 2003a). If estate-tax exclusions are increased significantly or repealed altogether, some argue nonprofit organizations will be affected negatively while others claim the additional wealth will result in greater philanthropy. Lower income-tax rates, non-itemizer



deduction allowances, and charitable rollover of IRA assets all could affect giving (2003a).

Tempel (2003a) sees another organizational challenge among younger donors. Entrepreneurial philanthropy has younger, venture-capitalist oriented philanthropists taking interest in giving, but their need for control flies in the face of current fund-raising models. Furthermore, younger volunteers want to more directly participate in the operation of nonprofit organizations, requiring adjustment of existing volunteer structures. Professionalization of the voluntary sector of the economy and fund raising, in particular, helps enhance philanthropy, but it also holds the capacity to diminish volunteer engagement (2003a).

Seiler (2003c) notes that the fund-raising cycle is the basis for planning. It examines the case of the organization, market requirements, states the organization's need, and defines objectives. Next, it turns to close external audiences to validate the preceding, identify gift markets, giving sources, and fund-raising vehicles, and develop a fund-raising and communication plan. Lastly, it activates volunteers and staff in gift solicitation and stewardship. Because the fund-raising cycle is iterative, the process begins again at another point in time (2003c).

To develop a constituency for fund raising, the organization must identify its target audiences, structuring its activities in concentric circles away from the center (Seiler, 2003a). Those closest to the organization and most likely to provide gift support are targeted first. Through the fund-raising process, these people are engaged in

communication, special events, and volunteer activities that will develop their affinity, understanding, and desire to support the organization (2003a).

Another fundamental of fund raising is developing and articulating a written case for support (Seiler, 2003b). This document will include the organization's mission statement, goals, objectives, programs and services, finances, governance, staffing, facilities and service delivery, planning and evaluation, and the organization's history. The preceding is an internal document, which includes comprehensive detail of the case's development, relationship to the strategic plan, and citations that support its claims. The external document shares the story of the organization, alluding to the case's dimensions in a narrative form (2003b).

The integrated, or total, development plan includes fund raising, but also planning and communication (Seiler, 2003d). It considers the sources and benefits of donor gifts and fund-raising strategies based on type of prospect and prospect contact. For the integrated development plan to be successfully implemented, the institutional plan should be updated, the organization's entire board should be involved, the case for support should be completed, the volunteers for fund raising should be identified and trained, and the planning process completed (2003d).

Fund-raising consultants help organizations determine their institutional readiness for annual and capital campaigns (Reid, 2003). They also help develop planned giving programs, communication, and marketing for organizations. They provide prospect identification, board and staff training, special event planning, strategic long-range planning, and executive searches. In addition to expertise, consultants provide an outside

perspective to relieve organizations from unrealistic expectations. When hiring a consultant, credentials, experience, frequency and forms of interactions with client, ownership of materials and intellectual property, and deliverables and fees must all be considered and negotiated (2003).

Strategic planning for voluntary sector organizations includes identifying organizational strengths and vulnerabilities, planning according to those strengths and vulnerabilities, developing a constituency for fund raising, and implementing an integrated development plan (Tempel, 2003c). Professional consultants may provide both valuable organizational planning and fund-raising direction as organizational objectives from the relationship are specifically defined (Reid, 2003).

#### Management and Leadership

Management issues include leadership and team building, trustee roles, thinking strategically about information, the effective use of technology, accountability and budgeting, and selecting and working with fund-raising consultants (Elkas, 2003). The effective organizational leader ensures open communication is articulate and capable of influencing teamwork, trustworthy and fair, a good listener, appreciates those with less power in the organization as much as those with more, sets clear and challenging goals, acknowledges good work and provides constructive criticism, inspires creativity and optimism, proud of the fund raiser role, exemplifies a code of ethics, and recognizes the importance of philanthropy to nonprofit organizations. Basic functions include analysis, planning, execution, control, evaluation, and professional ethics. These support professional and support staff and volunteer retention and evaluation activities. Policies

and procedures, including gift processing and acknowledgement, prospect research, internal gift reports and communication, record system and maintenance, resource materials, and office and other physical requirements need to be set and maintained (2003).

Leaders need to attract and keep staff, donors, and volunteers, give direction to and effectively manage the fund-raising process, and exhibit transparency in reporting (Grace, 2003). Leaders need to be concerned with the mission and values of the organization, ensure the organization works as a partner in its environment, seek results, evaluate the venture philanthropy movement, and consider donor expectations. Fund-raising leaders need to ensure board members are oriented to the organization's mission and how it raises funds. They also need to work on policy development and help focus attention on fund raising, particularly for major gifts (2003).

Board members serve a moral responsibility as they function as trustees of a nonprofit organization (Henderson, 2003). They are stewards, donors, solicitors, prospectors, advocates, visible attendees of special events, and team builders. Staff professionals need to understand and appreciate the values of each board member. They also need to assess their fund-raising capabilities, increase their knowledge about the process and organization, bring reluctant members along slowly, make known achievements to other members, accept their role and power as fund raisers, emphasize their stewardship responsibilities, set board goals, emphasize mission over money, teach philanthropy, and expand their view of the organization's environment (2003).

Effective leadership involves cultivating attributes and performing functions that enable the organization's mission to be realized through staff activities and board policy making. The next section focuses on various fund-raising methods.

### Fund-Raising Methods

Methods of fund raising include direct mail, e-philanthropy, personal solicitation, special events, and grassroots efforts (Warwick, 2003). Direct mail enables growth in organizational fund raising, awareness by donors and volunteers of the organization's mission, greater visibility of the organization, efficiency in communication and fund raising, and stability of funding. Donor lists come from two sources: Existing donors and donors the organization hopes to acquire from outside the organization. Lists should be segmented on the basis of most recent contributions, frequency of contributions, giving level, and source or channel of the first gift. Direct mail is most effective when lists are carefully selected, the appeal is clear, copywriting is conversational and personal, and format and design of materials make sense. Direct mail must be viewed as a process, not an event, requiring repetition and time to build value in the fund-raising process. Testing allows incremental improvements, and timely and accurate record keeping is critical to success (2003).

The Internet is a cost-effective way of engaging the donor, but must be integrated into the nonprofit organization's overall fund-raising strategy and considered a relationship-building tool (Hart, 2003). E-philanthropy techniques include "communication, education, and stewardship, on-line donations and membership, event registration and management, prospect research, volunteer recruitment and management,

and relationship building and advocacy” (p. 264). Technology can be used “to solicit and receive donations, recruit new volunteers or members, match volunteers with work assignments, link visitors to the organization’s knowledge base, [and] to provide Internet-based services for board and volunteer development and strategic planning assistance” (Kercheville & Kercheville, 2003, p. 369). To leverage these opportunities, planning and communication are important. Finding competent people to implement technology most appropriate for the organization is necessary for it to be utilized as intended. Tasks include integrating various databases and data sources and tapping into the Internet. When done effectively, technology can become a powerful decision-making tool for organizational fund-raising efforts (2003).

Hodge (2003) refers to an eight-step direct solicitation process for major gifts. This includes prospect identification, qualification, development of strategy, cultivation, solicitation and negotiation, acknowledgement, stewardship, and renewal. Hodge’s take on major-gift fund raising is simple: “Fund raising is the gentle art of teaching people the joy of giving” (2003, p. 94). But before this can be contextually taught, the donor’s values and desire to leave a legacy must be known. From here, it is a matter of knowing the donor’s timing and objective impact upon the fund raiser’s organization that enable the success of the invitation to participate. Acknowledging that participation and demonstrating its impact not only affects the fund raiser’s integrity, but also the likelihood of another gift of significance (2003).

Special events do not happen without intentional planning and involvement on the part of a nonprofit organization’s volunteers (Wendroff, 2003). Marketing of the event

includes “identification of potential attendees, organizational values to be promoted, programs to be supported through the event, communication vehicles, training of key staff and volunteers, public relations to promote the event, and implementation of the marketing plan” (p. 282). Budget needs to be considered and evaluation techniques need to be applied to ensure objectives of the event are accomplished (2003).

Grassroots fund raising is a great illustration of the power of people and ideas over that of organizational and social structures (Klein, 2003). In addition to raising money, special events, direct mail, public speaking, and personal solicitation are all methods for engaging volunteer involvement and raising awareness of the cause being advanced (2003).

Methods of fund raising include direct mail, e-philanthropy, personal solicitation, special events, and grassroots efforts. While these methods are used for fund raising, they are also forms of developing awareness and maintaining relations with donor prospects. The next section addresses more details related to prospect engagement.

### Prospect Engagement

The building blocks of successful prospect engagement include prospect information, the annual fund, gifts of significance, capital campaigns, endowment, and planned-giving programs (Rosso & Schwartzberg, 2003). The annual fund represents the cornerstone of subsidizing the operations of every nonprofit organization. Pursuing these funds effectively involves first understanding giving segments (traditional pyramid) and what each will do for an organization’s overall goal (inverted pyramid). When giving is segmented by donor capacity, the number of donors in each segment is typically

illustrated by a traditional pyramid. The largest gift capacity segment (top of the pyramid) has the fewest donor prospects while the smallest gift capacity segment (bottom of the pyramid) has the most donor prospects. However, the impact each segment will have on a campaign is illustrated by an inverted pyramid. “The top 10% of the gifts received during the annual fund have the potential to produce 60% of the money required to meet the goal” (p. 74). “The next 20% of gifts will account for 15-25% of the money required (with the) remaining 70% of gifts (covering) the remaining 15-25%” (p. 74).

Information about prospects becomes more valuable as relationships develop (Nudd, 2003). Facts and figures are only meaningful in the context of the prospect’s relationship to the organization and the subsequent fund-raising strategy for that individual. Acquiring appropriate information should be viewed as an obligation of development officers. It includes information about the organization itself, needs of the organization, the fund development effort, fund-raising successes and failures, donors, solicitors, key institutional players, the nonprofit environment in which the organization has a role, giving and philanthropy, and personal information. Information must be handled with care, as it is a significant asset of the organization that needs to be managed (2003).

Understanding patterns of giving within an organization is important to understanding what strategies of prospect engagement to apply (Rosso & Schwartzberg, 2003). The ladder of effectiveness from The Fund-Raising School, an organization within the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, illustrates strategies for fund-raising engagement. On the bottom rung is media, advertising, and the Internet.



Progressing upward, rungs include special events, correspondence, telemarketing, and personal contact, moving toward a more personalized, and costly, form of contact. Lastly, annual giving activities must coincide with the organization's fiscal calendar, orienting activities toward when segments give and providing appropriate time for sequencing of strategies (2003).

Gifts of significance have the potential of making a transformative impact upon a voluntary sector organization (Hodge, 2003). Hodge's transactional stage represents a financial entry point to an organization through "transactional" giving, an activity that does not require much involvement or sacrificed on the part of the donor. The transitional stage moves the donor to a greater point of financial engagement where the donor begins to identify himself or herself with the organization. The transformational stage is that in which the donor's degree of commitment with the organization is so high it enables a gift so significant that the organization is truly changed by it. Annual giving usually fits in the first category of transformative philanthropy; gifts of significance are found in the latter two. To move into these categories, fund raising must involve personal relationship development (2003).

Capital campaigns represent concerted efforts during specific timeframes to raise funds to build organizational infrastructure (Pierpont, 2003). Pre-campaign planning involves staffing, budgeting, volunteer coordination, communication, and discovering prospect and gift feasibility. Engagement and solicitation occur in a sequential pattern, beginning with those at the top of a campaign gift chart and moving downward. The

beginning of a campaign is considered a quiet phase, where larger gifts are secured before moving to a public phase where the campaign is publicly communicated (2003).

Endowment building has the capacity of bringing stability to any organization's operation (Schumacher, 2003). But maintaining an endowment and possessing the ability to raise funds for it are challenging. Development and maintenance of an endowment can be costly and require trusted legal and investment expertise. Furthermore, venture philanthropists with targeted charitable agendas are not prospects. Only those with an appreciation and vision for what the organization is about today and could be tomorrow are prospects. Furthermore, these donors need to have the capacity to invest in such a way that the endowment can be meaningful. Testamentary and irrevocable planned gifts are vehicles through which donors often support endowment funds. These gift vehicles enable donors who most identify with the mission of an organization to ensure its future with a significant portion of their wealth (2003).

As with endowment fund raising, planned-gift fund raising is something an organization should not enter into lightly (Regenovich, 2003). Leadership must be committed to engaging in activities that may not yield contributions for some time. Policies and competent staff must be secured, management and marketing of various gift vehicles must be considered, and how prospects, particularly existing donors, will be approached need to be coordinated with other fund-raising functions. But with bequests representing 7.7% (\$16.33 billion) of the total \$212 billion in all voluntary sector contributions in 2001, the opportunities are significant (2003).

Prospect engagement involves developing an understanding of donor prospects and their interest and capacity in supporting an institution. To maintain good relations, a voluntary sector organization needs to be accountable to its donor prospects and exhibit ethical propriety through its interactions.

### Accountability and Ethics

Tempel (2003a) notes that nonprofit organizations have present-day challenges that include accountability in the forms of responsible executive compensation, following reporting standards that comply with the law, and being transparent in their practice. Part of this is attributed to the fact that voluntary sector organizations look more like the for-profit businesses that “have entered fields like health care, education, and social service that were once the sole province of the nonprofit sector” (p. 8).

Accountability through budget assessment is not only ethical, but also critical to performance enhancement (Greenfield, 2003). This involves packaging revenue and costs from the various fund-raising channels, accounting cost-per-dollar raised and return-on-investment. Performance enhancement is important not only in public relations to donors, but also to the organization fulfilling its mission. Organizations need to establish assessment criteria. Is the community better off? Is it changing for the better? Do results in programs and services factor in the organization’s mission? Can quality be demonstrated as much as quantity of programs and services? Can the good the organization has accomplished be attributed to the funds it has received? These are the more important and less quantifiable measures of assessment the organization needs to consider.

As mentioned previously, AFP has a code of ethical principles and standards of professional practice that governs its members (Tempel, 2003b). In particular, it outlines standards for professional practice, solicitation and use of charitable funds, presentation of information, and compensation. Some broad questions every professional needs to consider include the role of trust, whether the donor or organization is the client, and the intentions of the donor and organization in every transaction. Some ethical attributes include “honesty, integrity, promise-keeping, loyalty, fairness, concern and respect for others, law-abidingness and civic duty, pursuit of excellence, [and] personal accountability” (pp. 423-424).

An ethical and effective practice of biblically-inspired fund raising is one that focuses as much attention upon donor interests as on the fund raiser’s cause for the sake of something greater than both, suggest Jeavons and Basinger (2000). This principle is noted in Kelly’s two-way symmetrical model, which seeks integrity in fund raising so that charitable organizations might remain trustworthy for their own good and for the good of society as a whole (1998, p. xv). But for evangelicals, the good of charitable organizations and even society is not the ultimate motive for their giving. Jesus teaches in the book of Matthew 22:37-39 that loving “your neighbor as yourself” is the second greatest commandment after loving “the Lord your God.” Therefore, Henri Nouwen notes, “fund-raising is first and foremost a form of ministry” (2004, p. iv).

Effective fund raising involves strategic planning, management and leadership, employment of fund-raising methods and prospect engagement activities, and accountability and ethics. Accountability contributes to the trustworthiness of an

organization. In an evangelical context, this accountability is demonstrated in part by a faith in God's provision through exhibition of grace in fund development practice. This idea will be elaborated in the next section about evangelical context.

### Evangelical Context

Kelly (1998) suggests that the two-way symmetrical model is a most ethical approach to fund development. The two-way symmetrical model forms mutual understanding of mission through a strategic surrender of organizational autonomy in exchange for sustenance and socially-constructed identity. Donors have access to more information about the charitable organization and more influence upon what its identity ought to be. "Whereas the four models constitute a positive theory in that they describe how fund raising is practiced, the two-way symmetrical model provides a normative theory of how fund raising *should* be practiced to be ethical and effective" (Kelly, 1998, p. 157, italics in original). The symmetrical relationship depends on donor agreement and collaborative negotiations on the part of practitioners.

Jeavons and Basinger (2000) provide a normative concept for fund raisers of Christian faith representing organizations of Christian mission that closely aligns with Kelly's two-way symmetrical model. Their book, Growing Givers' Hearts, was born out of seven case studies Jeavons and Basinger conducted with Christian organizations that demonstrated success in reaching both spiritual and financial objectives in their fund-raising programs. These organizations represent a cross-section of Christianity that includes Roman Catholic and mainline and evangelical Protestant theological traditions.

### Biblical Views of Giving

According to Jeavons and Basinger (2000), the biblical view on charitable giving is divided between different books within the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. For the Israelites, the notion of the Hebrew term, *tithe*, meant “giving a tenth of one’s goods or income – typically the ‘first fruits’ (Deuteronomy 26:10-11) – for the support of the community’s religious institutions and the religious and charitable works they carried out” (p. 42). The giving of one’s tithe affords the individual “a sense of affiliation and a sense of justice – and perhaps even gratitude – among the people, recognizing that ‘apart from God,’ they ‘have no good thing’ (Psalms 16:2)” (p. 43). In return, Israelites were to ask God to bless them and their land. “There is a strong element of reciprocity in this view, in that one can expect to be cared for in such a community and so one has a responsibility to contribute to the support of that community” (p. 44). While giving in this way can be and was construed in Old Testament times as calculated, it was not the intent of God. “‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me’ (Isaiah 29:13)” (pp. 44-45). God desires one to give out of cheerfulness for all he or she receives from God.

In the New Testament, Jesus adds to the Old Testament notions of giving for justice and reciprocity a greater expectation. “‘Love (your) enemies, and do good, and lend expecting nothing in return’ (Luke 6:32-36)” (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000, p. 45). Christ’s death brings atonement for sin and, thus, ritualistic sacrifices are no longer required. What then becomes the role of giving? It is expressing appreciation to God for his gift of salvation by giving to others. “‘If anyone has the world’s goods and sees his

brother in need, yet closes his heart to him, how does God's love abide in him?' (1 John 3:17)" (p. 46).

Because Israelites were socialized to pay their tithe as a "temple tax" to provide for the Levitical temple priests, there was not a real need to "ask" for gifts toward charitable purposes in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, however, Jesus tells Peter and Andrew to leave their trade of fishing and follow Jesus, who promised to make them "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). These early workers in the church, many of whom were Jewish, stood outside the Judaic traditions and thus the temple compensation structure. They were not to take any "money in (their) belts" (Mark 6:8) on their journey, but simply to accept the kindness of those who would choose to give to their needs without asking. "Willingness to live and work under such conditions was viewed as a vital testimony to one's faith" (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000, p. 49).

The Apostle Paul followed this same code as a missionary. However, he recognized the needs of others, particularly churches, and was masterful at encouraging financial support that would benefit giver and receiver alike. In chapter eight of the second book of Corinthians in the Bible, Paul organizes "a campaign 'for relief of the saints,' for poor Christians in Jerusalem, and is employing a modified lead gift strategy. Here he is telling the brethren in Corinth how much those in Macedonia already gave in order to encourage their generosity" (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000, p. 51). However, the "how much" Paul refers to pertains to the currency of behavior more than coin. "Paul tells the Corinthians that 'out of ...their overflowing joy and extreme poverty' the Macedonians gave in 'rich generosity...even beyond their own ability' and that 'they

urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints' (2 Corinthians 8:2-4). Paul then goes on to tell the Corinthians his hope that they will 'excel in this grace of giving' (8:7) and he commends them because the year before 'they were not only the first to give, but also (the first) to have the desire to do so' (8:10)" (p. 51).

Paul is appealing to the Christian virtues of sacrifice and grace in his letter to the Corinthians. But his appeal seems effective because it is delivered in the context of trusted relationship. "Trust is a fundamental precondition for all successful fundraising and should be a hallmark in all relationships among Christians" (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000, p. 53). Furthermore, reciprocity is found in this exchange of asking and giving, but it is, as Bassler notes, "'rooted in a prior exchange of spiritual benefits...not made with the promise of *generating* these benefits'" (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000, p. 53, italics in original).

#### Characteristics of Fund Raising as Ministry

From their research, Jeavons and Basinger identified four failures of integrity within Christian organizations. One is the lack of "honesty and full disclosure in communications with donors" (2000, p. 24). Another is the "[failure] to give full respect to the dignity, autonomy, and vision individual donors (usually attempting to maneuver donors into making a gift that does not express their individual values, passions, or priorities)" (p. 24). A third is the "[failure] to treat all donors (and potential donors) as being of equal worth in the eyes of God" (p. 24). And the last is the "[failure] to make clear connections between requests for support for work that is motivated and shaped by



commitments, values, and ideals of faith and the faith held by the donors so that the act of giving can be felt as an expression of faith” (p. 24).

These case studies revealed six characteristics of fund raising as ministry. One is a confidence in God’s abundance (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000). This is expressed through appropriate goals, “avoiding crisis-centered appeals” (p. 85), and portraying development plans positively.

Holistic perspective on God’s work in the world is a second characteristic. “Being one in spirit and purpose” (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000, p. 87), as noted in the biblical book of Philippians, involves allowing donors to give where they desire, confront donors in what may be inappropriate purposes for a gift, share resources with other organizations, and celebrate other organizations’ successes (p. 90). “God has no favorite causes,” (p. 87) and that reality ought to temper the competitive appeal organizations seek to make.

A third characteristic is an understanding of the theology that drives the organization. Jeavons and Basinger note from James Hudnut-Beumler, “Three alternative theological understandings of giving emerged out of the Protestant Reformation,” (2000, p. 100). “First is Martin Luther’s conception of giving as an act of thanks for God’s unmerited grace. Second is John Calvin’s view of the disposition of material resources as stewardship over something that is not ultimately of human ownership. Third is the Arminian/Wesleyan understanding of human acts of giving as volitional responses to divine activity” (p. 100). Jeavons and Basinger add from Oates and Tropman “the Catholic concept of the ‘social mortgage’ which suggests that

everything we have is publicly engendered – that a whole community has made our wealth possible” (p. 100). Within these traditions are differing views about aspects of fund raising, including the role of prayer, the place of the church vis-à-vis other church-related organizations, hiring effectiveness, goal setting, crafting appeals, and fund-raising methods.

Engaging more than donor dollars is a fourth characteristic (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000). This means first sensing where the donor’s passion for giving is. Furthermore, it involves providing information about the realities of the organization, both in terms of charitable investment opportunities and the outcome of past investments. A way must also be made for donors’ hearts to grow and to be ministered to during times of need. Participation in the work of the charity is a tremendous involvement tool, whether for cultivating or stewarding a gift. This is accomplished through allowing donors to do the work of the organization, virtually touch the work of the organization through technology, personally touch the work of the organization, or be connected to the organization’s fund development program (2000).

A fund development plan that is clearly integrated into an organization’s strategic plan is a fifth characteristic (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000). From good strategic planning an organization can expect consistency of what it funds, limits to what it funds, accountability for what funding accomplishes, and effectiveness in evaluating funding efforts.

A final characteristic is that “the development program seeks out, supports, and is guided by spiritually mature and reflective leadership” (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000, p.

146). Development officers and institutional leadership have an “intimate” interest in advancing the organization’s cause, for God’s sake, more so than their career. Spiritual maturity is exhibited by a clear sense of calling to biblically-inspired fund development, a capacity to critique conventional thinking about fund raising, and having one’s faith impact his or her fund development “in novel and creative ways” (p. 147).

Organizational CEOs who have these characteristics are most likely to identify them in potential chief development officers (CDOs). Their focus in securing candidates then becomes a matter of organizational fit over past performance and competency. When secured, CEOs support spiritually mature CDOs by enabling them to develop organizational board members’ own spiritual maturity as it relates to fund development and provide spiritual directors that guide the CDO’s continued growth. This growth occurs within a framework in which CDO “faith is at the very core of their professional identities, illuminating and guiding every program choice and every interaction with donors” (p. 157).

Effective and moral fund raising in an evangelical context requires prospect engagement on the basis of biblical values. In short, this is seen as fund raising as ministry. Six characteristics Jeavons and Basinger outline that are attributed to this practice are confidence in God’s abundance, a holistic perspective on God’s work in the world, understanding the theology that drives the organization, engaging more than donor dollars, having a fund development plan that is clearly integrated into the organization’s strategic plan, and the development program seeks out, supports, and is guided by spiritually mature and reflective leadership.

### Chapter Summary

Philanthropy in American higher education was born from a spirit of communal generosity. This generosity was fueled by an understanding that the grace of God and humanity, enabled by a democratic and free society, required all who enjoyed that grace to perpetuate it. Early settlers understood the importance of higher education and invested in it, including government bodies. Many colleges were formed and subsequently failed to become financially viable following the American Revolution. Those that survived and those created during the post-Civil War era enjoyed the bounty of Industrial tycoons who enabled the expansion and transformation of the American economy. At the dawn of the twentieth century, fund raising became more intentional in higher education with the introduction of consultants and alumni associations. As higher education proliferated to a larger scale after World War II, fund raising professionalized within institutions. Today, higher education fund development has become more sophisticated as more “privately-financed public” colleges and universities compete for charitable dollars.

Some giving is driven by altruistic motives. But this is not the exclusive motive, and within the context of social identity theory, a complex, hybrid motivational model likely describes most charitable giving. Schervish’s (1997) eight determinant variables serve together as a useful framework for distilling the various motivational theories of giving.

Those with high capacities for involvement and problem recognition and a low threshold of constraint for a charity’s cause have the greatest ability to effectively engage

with it. This becomes a beneficial framework for effectively knowing who are donor prospects and ought to be connected to a charity's purposes. Those meeting these criteria are worthy of two-way symmetrical prospect engagement.

Good fund raising involves strategic planning, management and leadership, employment of fund-raising methods and prospect engagement activities, and accountability and ethics. Accountability contributes to the trustworthiness of an organization. In an evangelical context, this accountability is demonstrated in part by a faith in God's provision through exhibition of grace in fund development practice.

Effective and moral fund raising in an evangelical context requires prospect engagement on the basis of biblical values. In short, this is seen as fund raising as ministry. Six characteristics Jeavons and Basinger (2000) outline that are attributed to this practice are confidence in God's abundance, a holistic perspective on God's work in the world, understanding the theology that drives the organization, engaging more than donor dollars, having a fund development plan that is clearly integrated into the organization's strategic plan, and the development program seeks out, supports, and is guided by spiritually mature and reflective leadership.

The next chapter addresses the specific design and research methods that are employed in this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

#### Introduction

Chapter One notes that the voluntary sector is still primarily supported by individuals, approximately 83.6% in 2004 (Brown, 2005, p. 18). This is true of higher education, too, where the Voluntary Support of Education's (VSE) study estimated individual giving to be 54.3% (Kaplan, 2006, p. 31) of all giving in 1997-98 and a Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) study estimated individual giving to be 57% (Miller, 2001, p. 97) for the same period.

Not only is a significant portion of giving to higher education from individuals, it is also from a relative few. Reiterating Kaplan (2006), the three largest gifts by living individuals represent an average of 29% of all gifts by living individuals at respective institutions of higher education in the 2005 VSE study (p. 16).

While larger gifts are being given, greater competition exists for those charitable resources. Exponentially more real dollars are given to charity today than 50 years ago (Brown, 2005, p. 11). But in that time an enlarged television, radio, and print media, which now include the Internet, combined with a larger voluntary sector economy, which has created more dollars to be spent in those media channels, has saturated the attention of prospective donors. The space of attention in prospective donors' minds and hearts to hear, understand, and respond to the story and appeal of various causes is shrinking.

Moreover, evangelical Christian institutions find themselves in direct competition with churches and missionary, humanitarian, and social service agencies that their own alumni rightfully construe as advancing Gospel values which deserve their support.

Considering the preceding realities, the purpose of this study is to explore the nature of the relationship that evangelical Christian institutions of higher education maintain with selected alumni who are major donors to their alma mater. Furthermore, this study examines how the process of developing this relationship may motivate or hinder alumni to make a major gift to the institution.

This chapter begins by providing a rationale for taking a qualitative, case-study driven methodological approach to the questions posed by this study. It proceeds by outlining the data collection and analysis functions of the case-study strategy. Trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and limitations are considered.

### Rationale

As noted in Chapter One, this research involves three CCCU institutions in a case-study design. It consists of interviews of development staff and administrative leadership and review of print and electronic communications. Furthermore, interview data were collected from 12 major-donor alumni. Data were coded and analyzed, guided by both Kelly's framework of fund raising (1998) and themes on biblically-inspired fund raising that emerge from Jeavons and Basinger's 2000 study, Growing Givers' Hearts.

The nature of this study makes a case study design and methodology an appropriate strategy for addressing the questions it poses. Case study is a methodology

within the qualitative tradition of inquiry. As such, it allows, Creswell (1998) explains, a broader view of the research situation:

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p. 15).

Such an approach describes various forms of qualitative research, including biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography (1998). Yin (1989) goes on to explain what differentiates the case study from other qualitative methods and describes its strategic purpose:

Case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. Such “explanatory” case studies also can be complemented by two other types – “exploratory” and “descriptive” case studies. Regardless of the type of case study, investigators must exercise great care in designing and doing case studies, to overcome the traditional criticisms of the method (p. 13).

While each of the three research questions in this study begins with “what,” they are really focused on the “how” and “why” questions to which Yin refer. This study explores “how” donor motivation is impacted by institutional major-gift relations, a contemporary phenomenon, and “why” donor motivation is affected by this relationship within an evangelical institution context, thus, the case study is an appropriate method of inquiry.

### Research Design

“A research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of a study” (Yin, 1989, p. 27). To



reiterate from Chapter One, the following are questions this examination pursues:

1. What processes do evangelical institutions employ to engage selected alumni for the purpose of encouraging a major financial donation to their alma mater? What institutional strategies are identified for each engagement process?
2. What factors do alumni identify that would motivate them to provide a major financial gift to their evangelical alma mater? What factors motivate them not to give?
3. What are alumni perceptions of their evangelical alma mater's ability to build relationships with alumni that motivate them to contribute a major gift?

This study explores institutional factors which positively or negatively impact the motivation of alumni donors of Council of Christian College and University (CCCU) institutions to give major gifts to their alma mater. The first research question of the study addresses the activities and strategies of major-gift programs within evangelical institutions. Understanding not only activities, but also the intentions behind them illuminates assumptions of practice that may or may not be effective.

The second research question of the study addresses factors alumni identify that would motivate them to provide or not provide a major financial gift to their alma mater. How the inductive, descriptive responses of donor participants align with current views of major-donor and alumni motivations and behavior further shape understanding of motivations and behavior within an evangelical Christian context.

The third research question of the study addresses alumni perceptions of the impact and/or effectiveness of institutional activities on their motivation to provide a major financial donation to the institution. If activities themselves do not express the ethos of the institution, they may violate the very goodwill the institution is seeking through them.

Yin (1989) notes there are five components to a research design, which include:

1. Questions of a study;
2. Propositions of a study;
3. Units of analysis of a study;
4. Logic linking the data to the propositions; and
5. Criteria for interpreting the findings (p. 29).

The “how” and “why” questions, noted previously, are those a study generally seeks to answer. “How do the relations evangelical institutions maintain with their donors influence their motivation to give major gifts?” is one example for this study. A proposition provides a more specific purpose that “directs attention to something that should be examined within the scope of study” (p. 30). The three research questions noted earlier constitute the proposition for this study. Units of analysis are the objects shaped by the proposition of the study. In this study, a primary unit of analysis is each evangelical institution and the sample of its alumni major donors. Logic linking the data to the propositions is applied through the data analysis process. How the data from this study relate to the research questions posed is the objective of this process. Criteria for interpreting a study’s findings are imprecise but nevertheless require articulation to ensure a study’s validity. Researcher position in the study needs to be addressed when criteria are defined.

### Case Study

“A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Yin, 1989, p. 23). While boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear,

the scope of a study is indeed bounded. Creswell (1998) explains that “a case study is an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61).

Yin (1989) notes that case studies can be used for a variety of examination purposes:

A common misconception is that the various research strategies should be arrayed hierarchically. Thus, we were once taught to believe that case studies were appropriate for the exploratory phase of an investigation, that surveys and histories were appropriate for the descriptive phase, and that experiments were the only way of doing explanatory or causal inquiries...The more appropriate view of these different strategies is a pluralistic one. Each strategy can be used for all three purposes – exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory...What distinguishes the strategies is not this hierarchy, but three other conditions...The three conditions consist of (a) the type of research question posed, (b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events, and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events (pp. 15-16).

Yin (1989) goes on to explain that “case studies have a distinctive place in evaluation research” (p. 25):

The most important is to *explain* the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. A second application is to *describe* the real-life context in which an intervention has occurred. Third, an evaluation can benefit, again in a descriptive mode, from an illustrative case study – even journalistic account – of the intervention itself. Finally, the case study strategy may be used to *explore* those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes (p. 25, italics in original).

Several dimensions shape this case, or “bounded system.” Because this study predominantly concentrates on the issue of relational impact of motivation, not the institutions that are relating themselves, Creswell (1998) considers this an instrumental case study, one where “the case [is] used instrumentally to illustrate the issue” (p. 62), as opposed to an intrinsic case study that looks at the uniqueness of the case itself. Several

institutional major-gift programs are viewed, making this a multi-site, collective case study (p. 62). Each case includes “multiple sources of information” (p. 61). The “context of the case...may be a physical setting or the social, historical, and/or economic setting for the case” (p. 61). Because attention is placed on the personal interaction between the institution and donors, the social dimension is the highlighted context for this study.

### Data Collection

“Evidence for case studies may come from six sources: Documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts” (Yin, 1989, p. 84). Documents include:

Letters, memoranda, and other communiqués; agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings, and other written reports of events; administrative documents – proposals, progress reports, and other internal documents; formal studies or evaluations of the same “site” under study; and news clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media (p. 85).

Archival records include:

*Service records*, such as those showing the number of clients served over a given period of time; *organizational records*, such as organizational charts and budgets over a period of time; *maps and charts* of the geographical characteristics of a place; *lists* of names and other relevant commodities; *survey data*, such as census records or data previously collected about a ‘site’, and *personal records*, such as diaries, calendars, and telephone listings (Yin, 1989, p. 87, italics in original).

Interviews in case studies are open-ended in nature; the degree of structure and time with a respondent become variables in this data collection method. Respondents with whom the investigator spends a lot of time may become more like informants, providing direction to corroboratory evidence. Informants become problematic when they exhibit too much interpersonal influence over the investigator. But this can be

overcome when the investigator relies “on other sources of evidence to corroborate any insight by such informants and to search for contrary evidence as carefully as possible” (Yin, 1989, p. 89).

Investigators may wish to make field observations of the phenomena in question. “Assuming that the phenomena of interest have not been purely historical, some relevant behaviors or environmental conditions will be available for observation” (Yin, 1989, p. 91).

“Participant-observation is a special mode of observation in which the investigator is not merely a passive observer” (Yin, 1989, p. 92). It enables the investigator “to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone ‘inside’ the case study rather than external to it” (p. 93). However, seeing something as an “insider” to the case phenomenon may create a bias within the investigator, particularly if the individual must “assume positions or advocacy roles contrary to the interests of good scientific practices” (p. 93).

“A final source of evidence is a physical or cultural artifact – a technological device, a tool or instrument, a work of art, or some other physical evidence” (Yin, 1989, p. 94). While “physical artifacts have less potential relevance in the most typical kind of case study,” they can be instrumental when they provide perspective of the phenomenon being studied (p. 94). For instance, a computer printout of dates and times schoolwork was conducted may require reduced or no direct observation time by an investigator trying to see how much students worked on a computer assignment.

Three principles of data collection include using multiple sources of evidence, creating a case study data base, and maintaining a chain of evidence:

The use of multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and observational issues. However the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation (Yin, 1989, p. 97).

Collecting multiple sources of evidence requires appropriate techniques:

For example, a case study investigator may have to collect and analyze documentary evidence like a historian, to retrieve and analyze archival records like an economist or operations researcher, and to design and conduct surveys like a survey researcher (p. 97).

Creating a case study data base involves “two *separate* collections: The data of evidentiary base and the report of the investigator, whether in article, report, or book form” (Yin, 1989, p. 98). Items such as case study notes, documents, tabular material, such as “survey and other quantitative data” (p. 100), and narratives of informants and respondents are all aspects of a data base that ought to be organized in such a way that expedites their retrieval as necessary by the investigators of the case study or future studies.

Maintaining a chain of evidence allows the investigator “to increase the *reliability* of the information in a case study” (Yin, 1989, p. 102). Yin uses a crime case as an analogy:

As with criminological evidence, the process should be tight enough that evidence presented in ‘court’ – the case study report – is assuredly the same evidence that was collected at the scene of the ‘crime’ during the data collection process; conversely, no original evidence should have been lost, through carelessness or bias, and therefore fail to receive appropriate attention in considering the ‘facts’ of a case. If these objectives are achieved, a case study also will have addressed

the methodological problem of determining construct validity, thereby increasing the overall quality of the case (p. 102).

### Gaining Access to Institutions

This study involved three Council of Christian College and University (CCCU) institutions. While every CCCU institution espouses the evangelical values of the CCCU, institutional faith traditions, cultures, and profiles make each one relatively distinct from the other. This enables the “different perspectives on the problem, process, or event [Creswell wants] to portray” (Creswell, 1998, p. 62). Creswell, however, is also sensitive to cases that are accessible (1998).

With these points in mind, the three case institutions were selected on the basis of diversity of faith tradition. The historical faith tradition affects the culture of each case institution’s culture, subsequently affecting its fund-raising practice and alumni values. In turn, different faith traditions yield different fund-raising experiences, which generate interesting case descriptions.

While programmatic elements of major giving are freely shared among voluntary sector organizations, donors are typically considered proprietary. This is especially true if it is perceived that the causes among institutions are relatively indistinguishable. For this reason, a high degree of trust in the researcher was required by the sponsoring case institution in order to grant access to a researcher from the outside. Furthermore, each case institution needed to successfully encourage major-gift donors to participate in this study.

All three case institutions are CCCU institutions. These institutions were engaged through established points of contact, usually the chief development officer, by the

investigator through correspondence (Appendix A) and telephone contact. Through this point of contact, each institution received templates of letters of cooperation (Appendix B) and a synopsis of research (Appendix C). When signed by an appropriate official, the letter of institutional cooperation allowed data to be collected through interviews with appropriate campus staff and alumni major donors and institutional materials, including documents and websites. This cooperative agreement was approved by the institutional review board at this researcher's sponsoring institution, Loyola University Chicago.

### Interviews

Those interviewed included institutional staff responsible for maintaining relationships with alumni major-gift donors. Institutional staff received a copy of the synopsis of research (Appendix C). As they agreed to participate in the research study, each signed a consent form (Appendix D). Institutional staff included the president and the chief development officer at each case institution. The interview protocol for institutional staff is found in Appendix E.

Major-gift donors were those who have given a one-time gift or pledge of \$1,000 or more. Eighteen donors at each case institution were invited by letter (Appendix F) to contact the investigator to participate in the study by an institutional liaison. All of these individuals received a synopsis of research (Appendix C). The first three donors from each institution who responded positively were interviewed. As they agreed to participate in the research study, they signed a consent form (Appendix G). Those not selected were thanked for their interest and politely notified by letter (Appendix H) that



they would not be interviewed. The interview protocol for alumni major donors is found in Appendix I.

Interviews were held at times and locations that were mutually convenient for the investigator and the study's participants. Most locations were quiet so that transcribers could easily hear participants' responses on audio tapes. Furthermore, most of these locations were also comfortable for participants so they are able to reflect and respond to the questions asked of them. Before interviews commenced, participants signed a consent form. Participants also received a copy of the protocol in advance of their respective interviews to begin reflecting on questions that were asked of them. A different protocol was provided to institutional staff representatives and alumni donors. Questions in each protocol related to the original research questions of this study. A one-to-two hour, audio-taped interview was conducted to gather participants' perceptions and experiences related to financial giving. After each interview was completed, audio tapes were given to a transcriber for transcription. Before any transcriptions occurred, however, the transcriber signed a transcriber confidentiality agreement (Appendix J).

### Document Review

Each institution's most recent impersonal audio, visual, and written communication intended for developing a relationship with alumni major donors and used in the current academic year was selected for analysis. Mediums could include the college's website, publications, brochures, correspondence, and automated e-mails and voicemails. Messages could pertain to institutional mission, campaigns, restricted and

unrestricted giving opportunities, and methods of giving property, such as cash, securities, real estate, and personal effects.

Regarding personal communication, a sample of any correspondence each institutional representative offered that he or she believed typifies effective major donor relationship building for his or her institution was selected for analysis. This could include letters and e-mails that express something substantive about the institution (i.e., a specific appeal to give) or part of a protocol (i.e., confirming a meeting). Care was taken to remove any identifying information of institutional representatives or alumni donors from all non-public materials.

#### Field Log

A field log was used to record notes of observations during the data collection and interview process. While much of what was analyzed was interview transcripts and materials associated with the major-gift relational process, some observations were included that brought richness to the data and how they were subsequently analyzed.

#### Data Analysis

Yin (1989) notes the various dimensions of data analysis, all of which tie into an overall analytic strategy:

Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence, to address the initial propositions of a study. Analyzing case study evidence is especially difficult because the strategies and techniques have not been well defined in the past. Nevertheless, every investigation should start with a general analytic strategy – yielding priorities for what to analyze and why (p. 105).

Two general strategies include relying on theoretical propositions and developing a case description. Theoretical propositions that drive a case study, including its research

questions, design, and data collection, are the objects by which analysis of the data is preferred. This is because there is logical consistency by addressing the theoretical propositions at every point of the case study design. Developing a case description “is less preferable than the use of theoretical propositions but serves as an alternative when theoretical propositions are absent” (Yin, 1989, p. 107), thus making a descriptive framework necessary for analyzing the case study.

As this study progressed with each case institution, case descriptions were developed and expressed as fully as possible while maintaining institutional anonymity. As data continued to be collected and analyzed, these descriptions became richer in meaning. And as data were compared between cases, each case description had enhanced dimensionality.

### Interview Analysis

Within a reasonable period after conducting each interview, personal and transcribed notes from audio-taped interviews were reviewed. Informal notes were drafted to record observations from interview field notes and from audio tapes that were heard before being transcribed. After audio tapes were transcribed and participants conducted member-check reviews, data coding commenced to begin identifying themes. Coding sections included interviews conducted among institutional staff and alumni donors. Relationships in data were pursued and recorded in notes.

### Document Review Analysis

Various brochures, correspondence, organizational plans, and electronic media were collected and reviewed. Themes, patterns in data, and relationships with interview data were sought, both within and across institutional cases.

### Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

#### Trustworthiness

Four dimensions of trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility addresses the validity of data and how they are interpreted. Triangulation is a method that ensures credibility by reducing the risk of personal bias through utilization of multiple sources of data. To this end, this study provided interview data from various institutional representatives and alumni donors and multiple materials for document review among multiple case institutions. Furthermore, member checks were invited of interview participants to determine the accuracy of collected data.

Trusted knowledge includes the ability for it to be transferred to other contexts. Purposive sampling of interview participants, whose descriptive responses provided direction for the study, enhance Lincoln and Guba's (1985) transferability dimension to trustworthiness.

Dependability addresses concerns of consistency with the data collected. Will data collected at a later time produce the same results? As with credibility, triangulation will only enhance dependability of data, making it more trustworthy.

Evidence of confirmability is found when other researchers looking at the same data find the same results in another study. While it is not possible to completely eliminate the bias present with any qualitative researcher, being continually conscious of personal values and beliefs affect on the observation of data, combined with triangulation, better ensures data confirmability.

### Ethical Considerations

Maintaining objectivity regarding the relationships a researcher has with his or her participants is an important ethical consideration. Stake (1995) notes the challenges of the personal nature of qualitative research:

Many qualitative studies are personalistic studies. Impersonal issues applied to carefully observed human beings become personal issues. Privacy is always at risk. Entrapment is regularly on the horizon as the researcher, although a dedicated noninterventionist, raises questions and options previously not considered by the respondent. A tolerable frailty of conduct nearby becomes questionable ethic when it appears in distant narrative (p. 46).

Place in life as investigator affects one's bias. "Subjectivity is not seen as a failing needing to be eliminated but as an essential element of understanding" (Stake, 1995, p. 45). However, Stake goes on to note from Phillips (1990) that this subjective understanding is capable of being misunderstood by both the researcher and the reader (p. 45). "This misunderstanding will occur because the researcher-interpreters are unaware of their own intellectual shortcomings and because of the weaknesses in methods that fail to purge misinterpretations" (p. 45).

Confidentiality is another matter of ethical concern. Measures have been taken to minimize the possibility of a breach of confidentiality. All information collected that identifies individuals and/or institutions by name, including audio tapes, will be kept

safely secured in a locked file cabinet and then destroyed within two years after the study is completed. The identity of participants will be preserved. The names of all participants, institutions, and programs will not be released or known to anyone other than the researcher. Interviews have been transcribed and coded using pseudonyms.

#### Limitations of the Study

Yin (1989) notes that case studies are limited in their generalizability. “Case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (p. 21). Even so, they possess value from their descriptive nature and the themes that emerge from case-specific studies.

As noted earlier, personal bias of the researcher is another limitation. Because of my experience as a fund raiser, I have preexisting views about the profession. These views begin to be known by the questions, context, and analytical framework of my study. Among evangelicals and evangelical institutions, I generally believe fund-raising should both protect and allow external input to institutional mission while encouraging evangelical donors' faith through their giving.

Some fund-raising strategies and processes were different from my experience, causing me to wonder their effectiveness. Likewise, the ways some donor motivations were expressed, their reasons for giving seemed to foster less of an identity in their relationship with God than I might personally seek. When compiling my field notes after each interview and review of communication materials and mediums, I was careful to note where my bias began to affect my interpretation of data. Keeping my views

suspended allowed me to hear the views of participant responders and how those views relate to others in the field beside me.

Lastly, there are limitations with the data that will be collected. It was expected that interview respondents would be truthful in their responses and reflect their true impressions. Documents that were reviewed and interviews may not have necessarily represented all perspectives or were accurate. Once again, triangulation helped overcome this limitation.

CHAPTER FOUR  
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION  
INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES AND PROCESSES

Introduction

As noted in Chapter One, the purpose of this study is to explore the nature of the relationship that evangelical Christian institutions of higher education maintain with selected alumni who are major donors to their alma mater. Furthermore, this study examines how the process of developing this relationship may motivate or hinder alumni to make a major gift to the institution. In light of this purpose, this study pursues the following questions:

1. What processes do evangelical institutions employ to engage selected alumni for the purpose of encouraging a major financial donation to their alma mater? What institutional strategies are identified for each engagement process?
2. What factors do alumni identify that would motivate them to provide a major financial gift to their evangelical alma mater? What factors motivate them not to give?
3. What are alumni perceptions of their evangelical alma mater's ability to build relationships with alumni that motivate them to contribute a major gift?

The first research question addresses the strategies and processes of major-gift programs within evangelical institutions. Study results related to this question illustrate the assumptions by which evangelical institutions operate. These findings are outlined and discussed in this chapter.



The second research question investigates factors alumni identify that motivate them to provide or not provide a major financial gift to their alma mater. Inherent in these findings is evidence related to the third research question, which focuses specifically on how alumni perceive the institutional relationship motivating their giving. Because of the relationship between the second and third research questions, the findings from both are outlined and discussed together in Chapter Five.

### Data Collection

Interview and communication data were collected from three Council of Christian College and University (CCCU) institutions. For the sake of anonymity, these institutions are identified as Heartland University (HU), Northern Metro University (NMU), and Western Denominational University (WDU). Interviews were conducted with nine alumni major-gift donors, three from each institution, who have given a one-time gift or pledge of \$1,000 or more. They were also conducted with each institution's president and chief development officer, the individuals primarily responsible for major-gift fund-raising at each university. In total, 15 individuals were personally interviewed. As with institutions, each respondent will be identified by a pseudonym. Appendix K provides an outline of the participants from each institution. Communication data included brochures, a sample of correspondence, and websites for each institution.

### Data Analysis

The process of analyzing data has included the close reading of field notes, interview transcripts, and various communication materials. Field notes, interview comments associated with institutional administrators, and communication materials

relate to the first research question that describes the engagement processes and strategies of institutions. Field notes and interview comments of alumni donors address the second research question related to major-gift motivation of alumni donors and the third question about alumni donor perceptions of institutional capacity to motivate major giving.

#### Descriptions of Institutions and Administrative Respondents

According to *U.S. News and World Report's* 2009 college rankings, all three institutions in this study are regional Master's Universities. One is in the top 15 in its category, another in the top 25, and the third in the top 35. All three have admission rates of between 75% and 85% and student populations of 3,500 to over 10,000.

Like many CCCU institutions, Heartland University began as a traditional undergraduate college of arts and sciences, but has since evolved into a university that includes both graduate and adult-focused educational programming. This Great Lakes-based institution began masters-level education in earnest in the late 1970s and flexibly scheduled courses for adults in the early 1980s. These commitments reflect both visionary and entrepreneurial thinking that are present not only in HU's organizational culture today, but also its theological tradition that encourages a Gospel witness through faithfulness to God.

Heartland's president of four years, Harold Swanson, understates his fund-raising ability by citing a relatively short track record as president with virtually no direct experience. A former faculty member and academic administrator, Mr. Swanson says he was not involved in seeking charitable funding during his career. However, his knowledge and instinct of people and clarity of vision for HU's mission position him well

for expressing powerfully the strategic charitable investment opportunities for HU, whether or not he's directly asking people to give.

Barry Smith, Heartland's chief development officer and vice president of advancement for two years, is new to running a fund-raising program but not to the task itself. A former CEO of a non-profit organization, Mr. Smith knows from experience the importance of larger gifts to the accomplishment of capital and operational funding objectives and how to encourage the individuals and entities responsible for making these gifts materialize.

Northern Metro University's main campus is based in the upper-Midwest, but it also has several other campuses. Unlike Heartland or Western Denominational, NMU's educational program began in the graduate realm and then moved toward undergraduate arts and sciences and adult-based education in the 1970s and 1980s. A denominationally-affiliated institution, NMU makes explicit efforts to bring racial reconciliation within the church tradition it primarily serves and society in general.

John Beamer is in his first year as Northern Metro's president. Mr. Beamer, like Mr. Swanson, is a former academic administrator with little direct fund-raising experience. Unlike Mr. Swanson, Mr. Beamer had years of experience in different roles at the institution over which he now presides. This has allowed him deeper internal and external insight to the values and issues of NMU. Internal perspective gives Mr. Beamer a vision for NMU's mission that accounts for the institutional mechanism that will be responsible for carrying it to success. His external perspective, however, enables Mr.

Beamer to craft the message of that vision in a way that is resonant with those stakeholders who will be called upon to fund it.

Northern Metro's chief development officer and vice president of development for three years, Brad Anthony, has served on NMU's board of trustees and brings experience in publications and current fund development from another non-profit organization. An alumnus of NMU, Mr. Anthony possesses experience with both NMU and fund-raising that helps him to advance the funding of NMU's mission.

The primary campus for both Northern Metro University and Western Denominational University is in a different location than when they were founded. Like both NMU and Heartland University, WDU has grown graduate and adult-education programs, but WDU's pursuit has been more recent. Western Denominational's theological tradition is similar to HU's, but the influence of denomination upon WDU's governance is more pronounced.

Burt Bailey has served as Western Denominational's president for over 10 years. He came to the position having headed a publishing company and served in the academy as a professor, dean, and senior administrator of institutional advancement. Most seasoned of the three in both presidential leadership and fund raising, Mr. Bailey is able to bring a nuanced perspective to attaining major gifts from alumni.

Like Brad Anthony at Northern Metro, Jacob Wilson comes to the role of Western Denominational's chief development officer with board of trustee experience. A former pastor within WDU's denomination, Mr. Wilson's objective for pursuing his Ph.D. was to

use it to serve WDU in an administrative capacity. Mr. Wilson is in his second year as WDU's chief development officer.

### Institutional Strategies and Processes

Review of interview transcripts, field notes, and communication materials and mediums yielded 10 processes that are linked to three strategic themes for engaging alumni donors. The three strategies are Attracting Givers, Relating Vision, and Inviting Investment. Processes related to the strategy of Attracting Givers are engaging alumni according to institutional affinity, providing meaningful giving opportunities, and expressing a compelling, mission-oriented message. Processes for the strategy of Relating Vision include prospect segmentation, conducting special events, and making personal connections. Processes pertaining to the strategy of Inviting Investment include utilizing volunteers, sensing prospects, negotiating gifts, and stewarding gifts.

### The Strategy of Attracting Givers

#### The Process of Engaging Alumni According to Institutional Affinity

Personal demographics, interests, and experiences influence the relationship of alumni with their alma mater. Reaching out to alumni according to cohesive and delineated groupings whereby their interest and understanding of their alma mater's mission is enhanced can be effective. Mr. Wilson mentions the multiple forms of engagement programs Western Denominational University employs to relate to its various constituencies:

We have worked diligently to create avenues of engagement for constituents and alums from different backgrounds. Parents' Council, President's Community Council, and our national advisory board are all central conduits for people to make a connection in different ways. Parents' Weekend and Grandparents'

Weekend enable the family to have a relationship with the institution, not just the student.

These are ways for alumni and non-alumni alike to better understand the mission of Western Denominational. Mr. Wilson also notes that WDU has begun alumni relations initiatives that segment among ethnic heritage and interests:

We have created a number of auxiliary organizations for alumni association that are built around interest. This year, we created some around ethnic diversity. Our alumni association now has 12 auxiliary organizations that are interest-oriented.

Enabling these smaller-group connections encourage deeper relationships among group members which also helps subtly reinforce their identification with WDU. Separate websites providing information related to purpose and opportunities to connect are on WDU's alumni relation's website.

Frequency of contact by various alumni engagement efforts is something Mr.

Smith at Heartland University is pursuing:

At a conference, I was sitting next to the alumni director from [prominent liberal arts college]. I leaned over to this alumni director at lunch and said, "So, how many alumni events do you have a year?" And he said, "Barry, there's probably not a day that goes by where there's not an alumni event somewhere." So I came back to my alumni director and I said, "Hey, I've got an idea. How about we do fifty alumni events next year?" And he swallowed hard. I said, "Listen, at least we're not doing 365 like [prominent liberal arts college]." So last year, we hired an alumni events coordinator. We're trying to dovetail with the existing university events and bring alumni to ballgames. If our basketball team is playing two hours from here, we might do pop and pizza after the game or halftime. It doesn't have to be rocket science, something big we have to do with our staff. I had someone tell me a long time ago that every event is a development event. And the best events are the ones where you can check off two, three, or four shop initiatives with one event. That's one way that we're connecting.

Mr. Smith describes an additional alumni segment that Heartland and other Christian colleges and universities must address, which are non-traditional adult learners.

While these individuals did not have the “college-life” experience of traditional undergraduates, there is merit in investigating the value of engaging these alumni, something Mr. Smith has pursued:

We thought one of the things that might be a touch-point is cohort groups who would like to get together after commencement. It’s an 18 month process where you’ve been with this particular cohort group. But a complication is that some of these cohort groups are online, and so you’ve got people from literally around the world in a cohort group. How to get them together is a problem. Sometimes they have a favorite facilitator. And so we thought to connect them with that facilitator might be a glue. But then we thought, ‘we’re an educational providing institution. We’re a university.’ So we’re starting to think now along the lines of continuing education and trying to build some models for that.

This thinking has emerged from consultation HU has received that suggests these non-traditional alumni value continued-learning opportunities, as Mr. Smith notes:

We just did a study with [consulting firm] on branding, and they showed the cabinet last week some of the preliminary results. It said there’s a difference between what your alumni on the traditional side, who have spent four years here, want to do with events and what your non-traditional adult students want to do with events. They said 33% of traditional alumni want to do events just for fun. They’re great with that. Only 10% of your adult alumni say they want to do things just for fun. They want there to be some other benefit, like continuing-ed or something like that. That informs our strategies moving forward. We might do less nontraditional alumni events just for the fun-sake of it to connect, and we might have some additional component to the events that’s a traditional-ed piece or something like that.

HU pursues this engagement by student learning experience with two alumni relations directors, one of whom is responsible for traditional alumni programming and the other, non-traditional alumni.

John Beamer at Northern Metro University sees the value his institution has played in the lives of NMU’s non-traditional learners and the opportunities it presents for relationships that might precipitate giving:

We've run graduate and adult programs for almost 20 years now. These are people who came to Northern Metro in midlife for one reason or another. They needed a degree. They'd just gone through some traumatic family event, and they've had a life-changing experience at Northern Metro. We've not done a great job of tracking, cultivating, and gaining commitments from that group of potential donors. I think it's a tougher group to get than your traditional undergraduate person, who's had the on-campus experience and then goes on to be successful. These are folks that already have multiple commitments. Many of them have kids of their own who are paying tuition somewhere. But there are people who go through our graduate and adult programs every year who have a life-changing experience for themselves in their faith walk, in their friendship groups, and how they view life. I think when someone has a life-changing experience; they're more inclined to give back to the institution. There are some major-gift prospects in that pool of probably, I'm going to say maybe, 8,000 to 10,000 students that we should have paid more attention to.

NMU engages by student learning experience through a magazine that is dedicated to one particular segment of graduate student alumni. This publication provides stories about how faculty, programs, and alumni, fulfill the mission of the graduate school at which these alumni studied as well as news related to its parent university, NMU. NMU's alumni office is also intentional about coordinating its alumni by geographic area. Councils for areas of key concentrations of alumni are given a presence on the alumni's website to share activities by which they've gathered to enjoy fellowship and express NMU's mission through service-related projects. NMU is structured to personally engage alumni by affinity with development officers for its athletics and graduate school programs.

Ethnicity, interests, and educational experiences begin to illuminate the complexity of the affinity alumni have with their alma mater and one another. Reaching out to an alumni base who have disparate understandings and appreciations for



institutional mission requires affinity programs to match. Doing this well maximizes an alum's capacity to relate and, thus, to give.

### The Process of Providing Meaningful Giving Opportunities

Major gifts often begin as smaller gifts. Because this verity is proven in many instances, particularly over the lifetime of a donor who has given and understands the value of his or her giving to the institution, the smaller gifts should never be confused as "minor" gifts. Mr. Smith at Heartland University notes the importance of smaller gifts in relation to larger ones, particularly when done with higher frequency:

Well, what one factor would point from the annual fund gift to the major gift and from the major gift to the estate gift? I think the one factor, in my experience, that dominates is how often they've given. The more faithful givers at some point give the larger gift if they have it.

HU ensures these smaller gifts are meaningful by leveraging class-reunion gifts. A recent 60<sup>th</sup> reunion gift opportunity was to provide a scholarship that would enable ten current HU students to have an overseas learning and ministry experience in Africa. Meaningful gifts are also leveraged by the promotion of a generous charitable tax credit available to those residing in the same state as HU.

Smaller gifts also amass more quickly into larger ones when they are done in a community of alumni. Mr. Anthony at Northern Metro University explains the importance of participation in this multiplication principle:

We're always looking to improve participation rate. We cannot motivate some people. But those who have an inclination, I can remind them that Northern Metro's mission has an alignment with their core intentions as a human being, as a follower of Christ.

Mr. Anthony goes on to allude that one of the most salient communities of alumni, particularly among traditional graduates, is a class:

On its own, with just minimal support from Development, the Class of 1958 voluntarily raised their class's interest and money for an endowment in the name of the class.

The power of class giving is when members of the class can identify the institutional impact of their aggregated gift. NMU recognizes this potential through its class giving page on its website. The school also believes that meaningful giving is found through its athletic programs, church relationships, scholarships, unrestricted annual fund, and bequests and life-income arrangements, as evidenced on its website by these structured giving opportunities. Meaningful giving also seems to occur through one of its graduate schools, as witnessed by what appears to be a permanent article space in its magazine for the appeal of giving back to this program. The direct-mail appeals mirror the website's expression that convenience of giving, whether by check, credit card, transfer of property, or online, is important to donors.

Mr. Bailey and Mr. Wilson at Western Denominational University understand the power of growing givers early at WDU. Mr. Bailey speaks to the importance of leveraging influential students in this process:

I do see more young alums that come out of here talking about ways to give back and ways to contribute and how to make this happen. We have to engage young alums faster. The passion, the excitement, the commitment is fresh. We can't wait till the tenth-year reunion. We probably can't really wait till the one-year reunion. We're finding key leadership people who are influencers within those classes and engaging them early on.

Through education and extension of opportunity, Mr. Wilson is intentional about helping mold young alumni into major donors by helping them experience the privileges and responsibilities that come with the status:

I want to multiply major donors. We take brand new grads and say, "If you'll give us \$20 a month, you're a major donor." We tend to define major donor by some arbitrary level of gift. We need to define major donor in terms of percentage of resource. If I can build a cadre of new grads every year who give me \$20 a month, I'll invite them to the major donor events we have so after five years they give me \$40 a month and in 10 years they give me a \$100 a month. If I can create a pattern of that, imagine what they'll give when they're my age and they have more resources.

While not explicit, Mr. Wilson alludes to the fact that giving sacrificially accrues benefits to more than the organizations who will receive the funding:

I think of the great story in the Gospels, where the apostles are fishing all night, didn't come up with much. Jesus comes out and says "Throw your net on the other side," and the net's more than full. They can't handle it. In scope, that's what I'd like to see: Folks understanding that more of them could be a major donor than they think they could be. I'd like for our major donors nurture other major donors.

WDU has a variety of brochures, mailings, and web pages related to special capital and class gift projects that, coupled with information on ways to give, provide tools for alumni donors to make meaningful gifts.

Building a base of donors is an important dimension to building major gifts.

Providing good reason to start this habit early, even among students who are also known as "alumni in residence," and encouraging it by expressing the value of such giving will help ensure the college or university receives the gifts it will require in the future.

### The Process of Expressing a Compelling, Mission-Oriented Message

Once an institution has attracted alumni and helped them begin the habit of giving back, what do they say that builds identification with their alma mater? Mr. Swanson at Heartland University incisively articulates a message of faithful Christian distinction:

The thing that really tugs at them, I think, is being able to say that you really have stayed true to your historic mission, that is a Christ-centered community of faith, and that we're serious about that. We have our first endowed chair, which came from a scientist who worked for NASA. There was a whole number of things that motivated him. Number one: We had a matching Lily Grant. So he was a great investor and said, "I'm never going to get a better match for my money than the 100% match that Lily will give." But then he saw that we had a first-class person in physics who could be anywhere. We had the former provost at [prominent Christian research university] here on campus yesterday to speak, and he said, "I can tell in two minutes that this professor could be anywhere." He could be anywhere. And he shouldn't even be here, based on the kind of research he does. But he's here because he loves the mission, and that mission is meaningful.

Such commitment by a gifted faculty member is compelling. If a person of this caliber has chosen to invest his talent at this institution, there must be something meaningful about the mission. Therefore, shouldn't someone of a similar caliber of wealth consider investing the same?

A message is most compelling when it possesses the pathos of story. Mr. Wilson at Western Denominational University shares the importance of storytelling in fund raising:

When people ask me what I do, I say I tell stories. I'd rather be this institutional storyteller rather than the chief fundraising officer. I think that the leadership's ability to articulate the difference that this place is making and the difference it can make is a powerful motivator to folks. We tell our story as an institution that is [over 100] years old and that has seen God's provision over time. So they're not just participating in the institutional story; they're participating in the story of God at work for over a century now. We tell that story in a frame of securing the next 100 years. So it has to be a sustaining story. We're fortunate in the sense

that we are in this transition from survival to visionary language. We no longer worry about being open next fall or worry how we are going to make payroll.

In a recent annual report, WDU chose to provide recipients an update through the eyes of a current student of an ethnic minority group. What does WDU accessibility mean to her? What about the role of faculty mentoring and educational and co-educational programming to her spiritual growth and intellectual development? This report helps personalize WDU's mission.

Mr. Wilson goes on to state the challenge of telling newer, non-denominational alumni that there is a survival story in Western Denominational's past and that older denominational alumni have a hard time comprehending the visionary tale WDU is able to tell today:

They don't have any survival history. They only see what's here now, this immaculate campus. For those of us who grew up with survival stories, we have to learn how to talk to them in visionary language. So you have this sort of bifurcation of your potential donors in the sense that we now have alums that are not connected to the denomination, and there's a tipping point in which you're going to have more non-affiliated alums than affiliated alums, according to denominational status. It's a both-and conundrum in the sense that you have to have both; you cannot afford to alienate either one. We will be a generation, a ten-year generation of shifting this work in terms of how we communicate to motivate donors. The story has to be framed in commonly held eternal values. So, it's not just an institution, but it's the kingdom of God. "What is it that we share here? Why did you send your student or did you come here?" Our ability to tell those stories well will define the outcomes for those folks at those levels.

Mr. Bailey alludes to the concern Mr. Wilson's "survivalists" might have about excellence coming at the price of confessional commitment:

One of the challenges for us is to understand the changing expectations that alumni might have of the institution. While our spiritual commitment, our spiritual vibrancy is absolutely bottom-line in importance, it probably isn't adequate in the same way that it was for the generation or two before this crowd. They're interested in a vibrant Christian context and environment. But I think

they are equally concerned about having a deeply qualitative academic environment that really prepares a student for the future and really makes a difference. You can't be second-rate in an academic and full-service component program. All of higher education has been ratcheted-up in expectations. Sometimes, to our detriment, we think it's good enough to have a qualitative spiritual environmental difference and maybe not pay as much attention on the qualitative academic experience. Most of Christian higher education, I think, does get that, and in the last two decades in particular has made meteoric change in how we approach that. But it's something you can't ever back off of. The balance is keeping the vibrancy of both.

Mr. Bailey goes on to describe how confessional witness comes by pursuing both spiritual vibrancy and academic excellence in WDU's educational goals:

Our capacity to really shape the character of the person, the quality of being, makes a difference when someone becomes an alumnus. Their character is different. I'll often have business people in town say, "Your kids are really different. They show up for work. They're on time. They give me at least a full-day's work for what they do. They are people who are trustworthy." So I think those characteristics that are being described about students are also the same about alums that become known for who they are and what they know. It's really what we ascribe for the value of a liberal-arts education: It is a fuller person that comes from the breadth of the campus and educational experience. There is that vitality of what it means to be fully Christian, which is spiritual, intellectual, relational, and emotional.

Borrowing from Mr. Wilson's metaphor of "storyteller," Mr. Beamer expresses the importance of not only telling Northern Metro University's story well, in ways people will hear and understand, but also to empower others who can tell the story more authentically, and thus more authoritatively, than he can as president:

We need to be more thoughtful and deliberate about crafting our messages. I think most of our donors want a thoughtful, yet from-the-heart targeted presentation. They don't want me to ramble ad-nauseam without a clear endpoint. What are the key messages? How do I communicate them? What types of stories make those key messages compelling? What's going to speak to the heart of a potential major-gift prospect? Furthermore, I think that while I need to tell part of the story, I shouldn't be the only storyteller. Some of the most compelling stories are going to come from our students, our faculty, and our staff. I don't believe we've done a great job of putting students and faculty in the position of

institutional storytelling. Too often, it's been only one voice. And while that one voice is important, good, and valuable, it begins to sound too familiar when it's the same voice year-after-year, event-after-event.

Mr. Anthony explains why NMU donors are one of those groups Mr. Beamer seeks to empower:

We are a pietistic organization. You don't want to appear to be bragging. Sometimes our donors are a little reluctant to raise their hand and say, "Yeah, you can showcase me in that publication that my wife and I gave such-and-such a gift that benefited the kids." As long as it's good for the school and the kids, we can twist their arm a little bit and say, "Look, we know you don't need the glory or the recognition, but your story would really be inspiring to others."

Mr. Anthony goes on to explain how a testimonial for giving a planned gift can enable understanding and courage for a gift vehicle that can be complicated and intimidating:

We try to focus on exceptional gifts made that are planned. Every time we've done it, we get a call from some other prospective donor who says, "That thing about Gus and Tilly. I'm in a similar spot. Can you talk to me about this?" You emphasize the blessing that these people experience in giving to Northern Metro to affirm its mission and support the students, and people will call us.

What an institution communicates is often not the message itself, but how it's conveyed. Mr. Anthony understands the implications of coordinating donor communications for Northern Metro:

We have an institutional publication, [name of magazine], which is the magazine of our college of arts and sciences and grad school at this point. We mention little of the seminary in that publication, although that might change over time. We're growing into what it means to be a university, a name that we took on based on our recent classification. Our publications are becoming more intentional. We're looking at things from the standpoint of our donors' mailbox and telephone in terms of how we are communicating with them throughout the year. Our publications, direct mail appeals, phonathon appeals, and other events to which an alumnus would be invited are becoming more intentionally sequenced.

In addition to the coherence implied by Mr. Anthony, NMU also values Christ, character, truth, learning, reconciliation, witness, and impact in its educational program. These

values are evident in NMU's mission statement and found both on its website and on a laminated business-sized card the university distributes to all of its donors.

The faithful Christian distinction Mr. Swanson described for Heartland University at the beginning of this section is often not enough to encourage support. There must be a role for a donor's giving:

An exigency can be created by a capital campaign or it can be created because of a shortfall. When you've got [significant] revenue in excess of expense every year, there's really not an exigency unless you create one. We can't move to the level of excellence and premiere status truly without some help beyond what we're able to generate. I think a lot of that means raising the reputation of the faculty, providing the resources for faculty in terms of research, in terms of load issues, certainly increasing our endowment in significant ways to preserve the future.

The preceding exigency seems to be missing for the donor Mr. Swanson describes in the following account:

We have a board member and a donor now who has capacity. They're on the Forbes 400 List. We're talking about multiple billions. They've already given to places in need. I've asked myself this balance between a big gift for need versus a big gift for vision. Because historically, as you look at what they've done, they have given to great need. Now, of course, people don't like to give to great need without the belief that it's going to succeed. There's a belief that, if you could help this and get it out of debt and move it forward, it has a worthwhile mission. But how do you challenge a big gift from someone who says, "They really don't need it and they're doing okay. I'll give them \$20,000," which is what this family did. \$20,000 is like me giving 25¢. So their challenge is only going to come from, I think, from this big vision.

Part of Mr. Swanson's "big vision" is certainly advancing academic programming, but he's also cognizant of the moral responsibilities Heartland has to its historic constituency:

Various theological traditions have flagship schools. What about our denominational tradition? What about a school that really maintains its desire to help not the privileged, but those who really have academic capacity. There's



great potential in need-based grants for people who have academic capacity. I hear some board members say if you have lots of money, you can afford to go. If you don't have money, people can find it through financial aid. But there's that middle group that have two-parent incomes. You can't afford it, but you can't get the aid. There's a growing consensus among our board, "How do we serve that group?" Although we only have 600 or 700 students of our denomination on this campus of [over 3,000], there's a real motivation to make sure they can afford it. Our denominational congregations are not an upper-middle class constituency. There's some real motivation to make sure that this place doesn't become too good and too elite for its historic mission.

Such vision becomes compelling when it is integral to mission and articulated by those who are convicted and can effect it, namely the institution's leadership. Such vision is evident on HU's website, direct-mail appeals, and campaign materials.

Attracting givers involves telling them a story which not only justifies their support, but is told in a way they can hear and be inspired to participate. This is something each case institution seeks in its various forms of communication.

### The Strategy of Relating Vision

#### The Process of Prospect Segmentation

A story of an institution's vision can be told in a publication, event, or to a single person. These communication mediums illustrate the gradations in which a story is personalized. Scarcity of time and resources dictates that an institution should economize the telling of its story in ways that generate the expected response from a respective audience: Their fullest support possible in advancing the vision with the largest return of institutional investment. The Pareto principle, also known as the 80-20 rule, dictates that roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes. Applying this rule to fund raising, 80% of the support will come from 20% of the people. Segmentation is utilized

to understand the 20% of constituents who would be most likely and most capable of responding to the institution's investment of relating vision.

Those most likely and those most capable are two different questions. Starting with the former, it is often those who know the mission of the institution and value it who will invest in the vision of what it might become. Mr. Anthony at Northern Metro University notes that these are often alumni:

As I look at the responses from the person who is a parent of a current student or a former student, it always comes back to an appreciation for not so much a particular benefit they derived but more a resonance and a feeling of identity with some aspect of Northern Metro that affirms its mission to them, and the evidence they see that they can contribute financially and in other ways to advance that mission.

Implicit in Mr. Anthony's explanation is that the mission will go on. Mr. Smith at Heartland University elaborates the return-on-investment orientation for those most likely to give in his account:

I was interested by an article I read not too long ago where Warren Buffett was asked, "Why do you give? And to whom do you choose to give?" And he said, "I choose institutions whose mission I believe in, and then I pick the ones I'm going to fund by the ones I think have the best chance to fulfill the mission." Well, our alumni understand our mission. And in a sense, they know us, warts and all. They know us inside and out. And so if they've had a good experience here and if they believe in what we're doing and what we're about, if in fact they were a good mission fit, then I think those that were and those that had a good experience here are probably our best candidates to give at any level.

Capacity is the other dimension of effective segmentation for more personalized engagement. Mr. Smith explains the simple proportion of major-gift prospects found in Heartland's donor population:

We're graduating 5,000 alums a year. If 10% give a gift, that's 500 gifts. And if 10% of those, which would be 1% of the total graduating year, give a major gift,

\$5,000 or \$10,000 or more, we'll go visit those 50 people. That's where we're headed.

But fruitful segmentation is more complex than simply identifying how much an alumnus gave. Mr. Anthony notes the power of generalizing periods in institutional history where capacity might be greater:

Northern Metro's a relatively young institution as a four-year undergraduate residential college. Through the late 1940s, it was primarily a seminary and a two-year program. In the late '40s, we started to have an accredited four-year undergraduate program. But we graduated people ready to provide service in low paying occupations, such as pastors, social workers, and educators, the three big majors from that time period. It was only in the late 1970s that we first graduated business majors. So you look at the life of those graduates from 1982 to '85. Only now are these middle-aged women and men in professional standing and positions of major responsibility coming into prime salary and management responsibility. Many of these are becoming involved in volunteer organizations with Northern Metro, like our national alumni board, board of governors for our independent foundation, and our board of trustees. So now these alums are being awakened, and we're graduating more and more over time. We have a greater amount of capacity in dollars and the number of alumni than we've ever had before, and it's only going to get stronger. So we need to find ways to connect with our alumni.

Mr. Wilson at Western Denominational University explains how many truly capable and generous people don't exhibit wealth:

A lot of donors have the appearance of wealth but they don't have any wealth. Oftentimes, we find gifts in places where there is no appearance. People have just been frugal.

Mr. Smith notes other variables he looks for in his analysis of good major-gift prospects for HU:

It's not just dollars they give, although that's a piece of it. And how frequently they give. That's a piece of it. But also whether they come to an event at [local outdoor venue] in the summer or the alumni banquet in the fall or they participate in their class 25th year class gift. And as we then look at all of that involvement, we can get a handle on, in addition to wealth factors, what the expectation might be for the size of the gift the person is able to and willing to give.

Once prospects have been identified and rated, they must be assigned to an institutional representative. Even for those to whom Mr. Smith and his team will relate Heartland's vision, the amount of contact they receive is segmented based on perceived value to the institution:

Our metrics call for a portfolio for a major-gifts officer of 125. Once we have the 125 assigned, we 'A, B, and C' them. I do that with the president. We share a list of about 50 people. We just now are engaging in conversations about A, B, and C-level people. The biggest gifts we think are going to come from our A-level people, and we're going to spend more time with A-level people than B or C-level people. Not because we don't love the B or C-level people, but just because we only have limited numbers of hours in the day and days in the week and weeks in the year.

Segmentation is more than the science of simply identifying alumni and current donors who possess resources to give. It is also the art of determining their real affinity with the school, which determines their genuine capacity to be a part of realizing the vision of its future in a substantial way.

### The Process of Conducting Special Events

The purpose of special events is not to ask for a gift. Instead, it is a method of involving special people in the life of an institution and subtly exhibiting what they and others like them mean or could mean to the institution. Sometimes, as Mr. Anthony demonstrates, the institutional association of the event is overt and participation is less exclusive:

We'll have a professor who is a published author provide a little seminar, and we'll pack it with 200 of the 300 people who show up that day. People come away with an appreciation. "Boy, that's a professor at Northern Metro that I've heard about. That's good." Then we'll have a tailgate luncheon, because people like to gather and eat. The one thing I've noted about Northern Metro alums is when they get together, it's quite a networking experience. Following the tailgate

luncheon is the day of the first home football game, usually a non-conference day that is not fully attended. So I will provide the complimentary seminar, put on by students or professor in the morning and then complimentary tickets to the football game. I'm providing options. Many people will come just for the luncheon. Many people will come just for the luncheon then football. Some people come just for the seminar and the lunch. And some people do the whole thing. It's self-selecting. Attendance has improved.

The flexibility of this event allows participants to experience the dimensions of NMU they desire. A brochure is mailed and is available to every donor. Even if they can't come, Mr. Anthony is intentional about inviting those larger donors who make a difference for NMU:

I extend the affirming experience to the invitation process and the invitation itself. Invitations will say, "As an investor, we want you to come and experience Northern Metro University from a fresh perspective through the eyes of our students and faculty." For those who aren't able to come, I still want that invitation to be an affirmation of their connection with us and our mission.

Mr. Smith describes an event that is more covertly related to Heartland

University's mission and to which participants are more exclusively invited:

There's a symphony in the summertime where the [local symphony orchestra] plays in an outdoor band shell. You can rent a few tables and have a picnic. We do that, and have anywhere from 25 to 60 or 70 guests. We did that five times last summer. It's a relational event for us to build that relational context.

A similar event provides major donors and prospects an opportunity to spend several days together where participants enjoy the offerings of a particular location, related lecture and discussion by HU faculty and administrators, and fellowship with one another. Like the summer events, individuals are personally invited to these gatherings. Information is available through a brochure that is sent to potential attendees and HU's website.

Mr. Bailey sees special events as tools for Western Denominational University within the matrix of relationship development strategies with specific people, processes, and objectives in mind:

What I believe we have done least well over time has been individual or a series of events with intentional direction. "Let's go have this event." Whether it's a reunion, retreat, or conference, we haven't sufficiently done our homework on the front-end to make sure the right people are there. We haven't done our follow-up to link the experience with purpose, relationship, and future capacity. We are pretty-well beyond that now, but in my early years, one of the things I discovered quickly was we were great event-doers. We had some folks who came out of event fund-raising and the structure and mechanics of following up were part of a different sector of that organization. So their orientation was about creating great experiences, but light on connection, follow-up, purpose. Events now are looked at as steps in the relationship, directional connections. Not reward, but opportunities to say, 'Well, my giving made a difference and I was recognized by an invitation to participate in this and build more relationship.' We're still early in that process.

Mr. Beamer explains the power more-exclusive events have had in Northern Metro University's major-gift efforts:

I think that some of our lead gifts to the campaign came in the context of those weekend events in Charleston, Wentworth by the Sea in New Hampshire, or Newport Beach in California, places that I normally wouldn't afford to go. But people who come to these events are capable of giving \$500,000-and-up gifts, feel they're getting special attention, getting an extra peek "behind the curtain" as to what happens at Northern Metro, and increase their sense of buy-in, relationship, and commitment in a context that's personally enjoyable and motivating.

Personalized events add a social dimension to institutional relations. The association between participants and the institution illuminates the meaning of the institutional message that is expressed. Just as large gatherings of alumni convey strength in numbers, small intentional gatherings are emblematic of power, influence, and expectation.

## The Process of Making Personal Connections

Relating vision through personal engagement is perhaps the single-most significant task to realizing a major gift. Mr. Smith describes its impact in the following account at Heartland University:

We had a fellow who responded to phonathon. Gave a \$1,000 gift. So we had a major-gifts officer visit with him. Found out in that first visit that the man had a net-worth of about \$6 million dollars, had just sold a business, and had a real heart for ministry students here at Heartland. He had never given a gift bigger than \$1,000. Three visits later, he signed an agreement for an annual \$25,000 non-endowed scholarship for eight ministerial students, \$2,500 each forever. And he told us he was going to put us in his will for \$1.25 million dollars. Now that's a major gift!

Accounts like this don't often occur by chance. They require the establishment of rapport and trust with a donor who reveals personal financial information. They require asking inquisitive, but appropriately received questions to learn of the donor's heart for ministry. They require an applicable knowledge of gift and estate-planning vehicles to generate student impact today and ensure it continues tomorrow. Such skill, knowledge, and passion for institutional mission tend to be scarce, which makes hiring such individuals challenging. Nevertheless, people like Mr. Smith seek them:

I'll tell you our strategy in a nutshell. I'm my third year into this position. My first year, I learned. My second year, I staffed toward my vision. I felt like with \$5,000 new alumni every year, we weren't doing a good job with annual fund. So I divvied it up into doable jobs and automated. I have a person now in charge of e-philanthropy, a person in charge of phonathon, and a person in charge of direct-mail. Now, we're trying to work those strategies. We bought some new software for phonathon. The first year that I did this, phonathon doubled, and we think it will double again this year. Now those aren't major gifts. But we've had some \$1,000 gifts from the phonathon, which for us is a major gift. If somebody gives us a \$1,000 major gift in a phonathon, we're going to put him on somebody's major-moves list. And now I'm staffing to have enough people as major-gifts officers to go out and see those people.

Mr. Wilson of Western Denominational University explains the ramifications of hiring unqualified individuals for intentional personal engagement:

We've had a lot of donors who've had a development officer assigned to them and a planned giving officer assigned to them, and there was no coordination. The planned giving office was engaged in a tremendous amount of activity that resulted in 914 files, nearly 600 of which were revocable and worth less than \$25,000 total. That was the sum of nearly 15 years of work by this organization. In the development office, we were running a direct-mail operation. There was no staff to do the relationship development for current major gifts.

Pursuing individuals with experience is part of Mr. Wilson's plan for creating a longer and broader view of giving relationships:

In the development office, we had a history of hiring recent grads with no experience with the idea we would mentor them and train them how to be development officers. My objective is to create what I like to call "orchards of donors" in which we plant seeds, nurture them over time, and harvest the fruit from the entire orchard, not just the low hanging fruit that comes to us. So I have made a philosophical commitment that we will hire experienced people. When we get a high-performing organization together, then we can mentor our own folks. I want a culture of experience, a culture of relationship development. If I can get those two things in place, then the systems will provide what we need along the way. My objective is to raise-up a fundraising organization that's as good as the quality of this institution. We're not there.

Mr. Wilson also recognizes the importance of encouraging gift officer tenure in enhancing lifetime donor relationships:

I want a program that engenders fundraising staff to stay a long time at an institution. When I look at the institutions and the people who are most successful, they've been in those institutions 10, 15, and 20 years. They've accrued relationships of depth along the way that encourages a donor to say, "What's next?" I have donors who do that with me now.

Mr. Bailey of WDU refers to the degree of intentionality by which more experienced major-gift organizations engage prospective donors:

In addition to an increase in my and Jacob's time and capacity to be in relationship, we will have to have additional senior staff who are out there asking,



but also thinking about those families and individuals that we need to be building a relationship that involves the development director, VP, or the president. How do we have systems, processes, eyes that help us identify that? One of our good and longtime donors sent a child to [prominent Christian research university] several years ago. This is a very wealthy individual. Within a week of the beginning of school, the development VP or senior staff person was in his home and was asking the question, "How would you like to be involved in [prominent Christian research university]?" Within two weeks, the president of this school was in his home and saying, "We would really like to have you involved." So it's that kind of system which helps identify the capacity then engage and build a sustaining relationship with an individual. We are not there yet. That would be one of the very major steps forward that will multiply what little we are able to do now.

Selling a product or service where there is a tangible value exchange largely involves the logical appeal. But the value a donor receives in exchange for his or her gift is less tangible. To bring equality to the value exchange, the donor's cognitive, emotional, and, many of this study's respondents would argue, spiritual senses must be engaged. This is the art of relating vision through personal engagement. It requires a cognitive, emotional, and even spiritual intelligence. It also requires a heart for the institution's mission and vision.

### The Strategy of Inviting Investment

#### The Process of Utilizing Volunteers

Inviting investment in a vision has increasingly become a task for professional staff. But it can often be most effective when volunteers have a relationship with the donor. Mr. Wilson explains the power of the volunteer network in receiving a leadership gift at Western Denominational University:

We have donors who will encourage their friends to give major gifts. Our board of trustees determined that a building for our school of theology needs to be our priority because that's the heart of who we are. The lead donor has five generations of his family having gone through this place. His family represents

one of the finest expressions of this institution, having both pastors and laymen in that family within our denomination. One of the trustees, a church leader who knows the donor well, went and actually asked the donor to make the gift. The donor consulted with his business partner, another alumnus, trustee, and lead-gift donor to another project, who said, "Yeah, you should do this." The donor gives credit to both the church leader for the initial conversation about the gift and the business partner who reinforced the message. We didn't orchestrate the conversation, and we only found out about it later. The network comes into play here very powerfully.

Mr. Wilson is seeking to empower other alumni to do the same in a current campaign:

For our science capital campaign, we are getting science alums to think, "All right, how do we use that network principle to aggregate gifts?" Would they take responsibility among themselves to raise X dollars? How many groups could we create in that larger group? It's giving them the language to help their friend think, "Could you give a gift every year for three, four, or five years?" The network is something that we're refining, but we're also trying to empower. I always have people tell me, "You need to go talk to so-and-so." "Why don't you go talk with them and I'll go with you?" Folks have lots of ideas who we ought to talk to, but they want somebody else to do the talking along the way.

Leveraging capable volunteers in asking for major gifts, a competency of more sophisticated organizations, is an effective way of stretching an institution's professional resources in the task.

### The Process of Sensing Prospects

Part of the art of asking for a gift is sensing when the time is right, and wrong, for doing so. Mr. Wilson explains a situation at Western Denominational University where comprehending what the donor reveals provides an opportunity for a gift:

Another way we find those major gifts is by teaching people to learn to listen to the donor. I sat with an officer one day with a donor I was asked to get acquainted with. They said, "I just finished paying my \$100,000 pledge to another institution." "Great. That's wonderful." This is my first time to meet this woman. We drove away, and I turned to this officer and said, "She just told you she has \$100,000 to give you." "What do you mean?" she asked. "She just finished a pledge. She's going to do something with that. You need to ask her for \$100,000 for this capital campaign," which was a business school capital

campaign. "I could never do that. I'm her friend." I said, "I cannot ask for that gift. I do not have that relationship." Part of searching for the gifts is knowing what to listen for, what to watch for, and to make the right assumptions.

In the following account, Mr. Smith doesn't indicate if he received the amount for which he hoped for Heartland University. He knew, however, it was the amount he was to receive that day, and because he did, it wasn't the last:

One time my wife and I went to lunch with this fellow and his wife, and the very first thing he did was pull out a check out of his pocket for \$125,000 and gave it to me. He said, "Listen. I know what we're going to talk about today. So here's my gift. Now let's just have a nice lunch." I've probably gone back to him ten times for major gifts since then.

Mr. Wilson of Western Denominational expresses the importance of sensitivity in inviting investment as it relates to both the long-term prospects of a giving relationship and to a gift officer's performance:

This work can never be about us, but it always must have a long view. The view of fund raising in Christian higher education is usually way too short. I tell my people all the time, "You never take the next step until you know what the next step is." And it's not unlike playing a game of strategy or a game of chess where you've got to recognize what the implications of the first step is before you can really take that first step. As we lay out a direction for relationship, think two or three visits down the road. Don't ever just think of this next contact. It's as important for me to know when not to ask as it is to know when to ask. We tend to think of the proactive side. It's just as proactive not to. I get in some situations and think, "Today is not the day." We need to teach our teams and our people that metrics are important, but we never get a gift to meet our metrics. I never want an officer's job to hang on a gift, because if that occurs, then I haven't done my work as their leader. I haven't done the evaluation assessment ahead of that time along the way.

Mr. Bailey of WDU notes how building friendship with a donor whose relationship is with the institution allows greater sensing of how that individual can completely impact the institution, not just through his or her giving:

Whole-giving generally comes out of the capacity to develop a relationship, to have a friendship. The relationship and friendship are somewhat different sides of coin. I think wise development people with donors are always building the relationship to the institution. There is a friendship with the person, but the relationship, if you will, is perhaps through me but it is with the institution because it must outlast me. And the opportunities that we have with donors as we know them and work with them is perhaps to provide a broader, larger, grander possibility for their “donorship” that might be more transformational. Certainly a relationship that is more than a donor’s gift enables more gifts over time and, perhaps, opportunities for us to suggest ways to really make a difference in the life of the institution.

“Hearing” more than the literal words of a donor is what sensing is about. It involves a comprehension of what is said and not said by the tone in which something is expressed, the non-verbal cues that are conveyed, and the deeper feelings that come with a “sixth sense.” Reading and reacting to these well, particularly at the time of asking, are key to eventually realizing a major gift.

### The Process of Negotiating Gifts

It is increasingly accepted that the vision of an institution is open to interpretation that comes from beyond the leadership of the institution. Even so, such interpretation is an exercise in sharpening both the donor and institution’s understanding of the institution’s mission and the implications a transformational gift can have on that mission. Mr. Wilson has carefully considered proposals that benefit the donor more than Western Denominational University:

One of the things that we say around here is that not every gift is a gift. We have walked away from some gifts because they got too expensive. Not just a dollar cost but an institutional cost. Resource dependence theory assumes that whenever you receive a resource, there’s an exchange that occurs. The level of control has to be keenly understood by institutional leadership because often times gifts transform institutions in unexpected ways. There are even unexpected consequences to the gift. I’m in conversation with a family who wants to give and create a sustaining organization at no risk to the institution. No investment on

the part of the institution. It has potential to be a truly charitable gift. When the proposal came to my desk, there were five points they wanted. I'm very careful and gentle to understand what's meant by these statements. I sought other counsel. So I said, "Hey, we want to sit down. We want to continue the conversation around your proposal." So part of what I watch for is the emotional body language, if you will, around the proposal. If it's constrictive in the sense of, "Well, I've told you what you need to know," then that's a flag to me that tells me something about what the cost is. If body language is open, then there really is an interest in an exchange of ideas. "And so in the first page of your proposal there are these ideas. What do these mean to you? What do you expect of these things? Are these preconditions? Are they desires?" These people have never given us much. But they have a family history of charitable work and philanthropy that seeks to multiply their gift. Now that resonates with us. Usually we have people come to us with profit making ideas from which the institution can benefit, but they want us to invest out of our foundation or something like that. I've listened to those deals, and I spent some money on legal counsel at my expense to make sure that we understand them, so we can make a decision. We have walked away from most of those. This one is different. It doesn't require us to invest anything. We're so unused to that that we don't know how to think about it. So I'll continue to walk down that path. It will be a conversation of significant length. And in fact, the proposal is already being implemented at some levels.

Mr. Wilson goes on to note the importance of involving those within the institution who understand more deeply the implications of outside proposals:

Our ability to deliver what a donor desires depends on our internal relationships. Fund raising is not simply about external relationships, but my credibility internally with faculty, the provost office, and others. When somebody comes to me with a gift proposal, I become the mediating agent in that transaction, because those colleagues of mine are going to have a whole set of questions. I have to consult with these internal groups to determine what the implications of a proposal might be.

Mr. Beamer differentiates the value of a journalism proposal that would benefit the academic and faith elements of Northern Metro University's mission from one that is more vocational:

We have a major donor who is in the newspaper business. He has a real passion for getting people to think about how Christian faith gets integrated into the world of journalism. That's a conversation we want to have on campus. It ties well into

part of our academic discipline at the undergraduate level. So if Harry comes to us and says, "I'd love to help you run an annual journalism through-the-eyes-of-faith conference and help you beef up your journalism major to the point where you could do a number of things that wouldn't normally occur in your operating budget, then we're willing to say, "That sounds like a great idea. Let's talk." If he comes to us and says, "I'd like you to develop a program to prepare newspaper editors for community newspapers around the state," we're likely to say, "You know, that's probably not something that we're interested in." If we could reframe that in a way that tied into our business major where we're looking at small business where there's a track dealing with community newspapers or something else, we might be willing to go down there. I'm trying to think about how I listen to people's passions, how I think about what they're trying to accomplish, how it fits with what we're trying to accomplish. It assumes that we have a pretty clear picture of where we want to go in certain areas, which isn't always the case. And occasionally, I suppose somebody will come up with money for an idea that we might say, well, we haven't thought about that, but it's worth exploring. More often than not, I hope that we're the ones that are coming up with the idea that then matches with somebody's ability to fund it. It's too easy to get distracted by the money and forget what your mission and direction are all about.

Once the gift is negotiated, Mr. Anthony notes the value to the donor of observing its impact:

You're developing through publications, through invitations to homecoming and events, but then the core thing is the relationship. You're listening. You're watching behavior. You're researching. And then you ask a prospect, "If you could bless one particular thing, what would it be?" "Well, you know I'm a newspaper guy, and I really would love to see Northern Metro take a leadership role in Christian journalism." So over a few years period of time, these donors provided for a journalism program through a testamentary gift of a substantial amount of money. But they recognize that the value of what will eventually come to Northern Metro in an endowment would put off 4% per year. "Couldn't we provide now what the endowment would earn and get the program going in our lifetimes?" Well, certainly we could. Now there's a win-win by listening to their interest and asking them what they would want to do.

Most NMU negotiations begin with a proposal targeted to fund institutional priorities.

The packet includes a campaign case statement, brochures related to campaign initiatives, news releases on campaign updates, letters from both the president and the gift officer,

initiative and dollar-level gift charts, a letter of intent, and a specific proposal of gift amount and designation. The packet reinforces the campaign's identity, which situates both the current context of NMU's mission and the vision of where it will be strategically advanced next.

Mr. Smith explains what Heartland University is doing to take the initiative and avoid the distractions Mr. Beamer refers to from his explanation of the preceding gift:

We're working to develop 30 or 40 three-to-five page white papers for some of our key academic initiatives here on campus. I'm in a meeting with a donor, I hear that they're really interested in mathematics, that they think we need more teachers who can teach math really well, and would really like to be involved in helping fund a chair in that department. I note that through my reporting system that I've set up through our major moves process. But then I go to the provost and say, "How about that endowed chair for mathematics in the three-to-five page white paper?" My next step is to go back to that donor and say, "Let me share with you a little something that has come up through academia for some of our math professors in the department and what our provost has in mind to where we'd like to go next." I share the concept and leave the white paper with him. I want him to take it home and ink it up in the margins. Then I want to have a follow-up meeting and talk to him about it again. "What do you think about that?" Then, within the latitude that I have with the provost, we could tweak it to be more in line with the donor's philanthropic intent. We've started with this white paper where we're getting ideas on a page that we feel good about delivering, fits our mission, and fits our vision as a university.

Mr. Smith notes the importance of the institution's capacity to manage a gift it might receive and the implications of that gift on existing institutional operations:

When I'm going before a donor and painting a vision for something that has a \$10,000 price tag, I probably won't get a \$50,000 gift. On the other hand, it's got to be realistic. It can't be \$12 million-a-year institution with a \$200 million-a-year vision. It's got to be scalable so that the institution has the capacity, right now, to fulfill this vision with the extra help that's needed. If it rings true, it can really motivate that donor to the larger gift because they want to make a difference.

Like Northern Metro University, HU's negotiations begin with a proposal targeted to fund institutional priorities. The packet is similar to NMU's, includes a campaign case statement and brochures related to campaign initiatives.

Mr. Bailey expresses the importance of sensing and focusing a prospective donor's attention on the real impact he or she wants to have at Western Denominational University that relates to the common ground both sides need to achieve for a transformational gift proposal to be implemented:

What we're really focusing on is that transformation, that change, that difference-making rather than just trying to bleed a gift out of someone. It's knowing what it is that really matters to a donor, and then hopefully saying, "Look at this bigger possibility that might exist." Or occasionally to say, "You know, given your passion, we need to help you find someplace else to invest," or maybe move that passion to a new definition within the institution itself. I think our great role is being able to understand and know a person, their passions, to apply the potential of that to a university or college setting, and then describe ways that that might happen. It's really the most fun part of discerning, describing, kind of deciding how that relationship and their resources match with what can go on through the institution.

Gifts can cost an institution, as Mr. Wilson noted. But donors have ideas that can effectively advance an institution toward its vision in ways that truly enhances its mission. When the implications to these ideas are carefully considered and become accepted by all the affected parties and authorized by appropriate institutional leadership, the gifts behind these ideas can truly be welcomed.

#### The Process of Stewarding Gifts

As noted earlier, smaller gifts are precursors to larger gifts. When the prior gifts are stewarded well by acknowledgement and expression of value, donors are more likely



to give again. This likelihood demands even more good stewardship with major gifts.

Mr. Anthony expresses how this principle functions at Northern Metro University:

People step-up with a larger gift when they see what their gift does. We're always trying to maintain a continuity of interest with the general mission of Northern Metro through an unrestricted gift to our annual fund. With a larger gift, there's personal appreciation for some aspect of Northern Metro and what it has done for their student or for them as an alumnus through a special experience with a department, a professor, or a particular program that was formative.

NMU provides various stories of gift impact in a publication that is distributed to its donors and is found on its website. These stories combine with news of current fund-raising efforts to reinforce the value of gifts that have been given and encourage new ones from those who appreciate the impact of their investment.

Recognizing the value of a restricted scholarship purpose, Mr. Smith initiated donor approval for a fund that would genuinely impact a student's capacity to be at Heartland University:

I made a phone call yesterday confirming a direction with a newly created endowed scholarship from a recent gift that came in undesignated. We decided to ask the donor permission to create an endowed scholarship instead of maintaining an undesignated use of the gift. And so I wrote it up, got their buy-in, and then said at the end, "I really hope you and your husband might continue to populate this with future gifts and help more students to be able to attend here." We picked a student that wouldn't be able to come back second semester were it not for their help with this latest gift. Well, this is our top-three net-worth person, and so that was a good thing.

Mr. Swanson recalls the unorthodox gift of money from Heartland to a sister institution in Canada that was struggling, but seemed appropriate with HU's board:

We have a sister Bible college that two years ago had a major shortfall. We felt that things were run well. I was sitting in a council with the other presidents of the denomination, we heard about this need, and at break time we said we'd like to help. But we don't want it to even be known. We had to take it to our board of trustees. And once you go to a board, it's hard for it not to go out someplace. We

all agreed that we would give them a \$125,000, which is not very much, but it is a significant gift to help this small struggling Bible college of 300 students or so make payroll. The agreement was that all the general officials and all our board would never say publicly that we did it. But when we made this proposal the question was, "How will our donors feel if money that came to you went someplace else?" We really were kind of puzzled by that and weren't really sure. The donor that has given more to this institution than any other donor was one of our board members. He's now board member emeritus. He stood up in the front row and said he fully supported this. Tears streamed down his cheeks when he made this comment: "There may be some people who would not give to an institution that gave away like this. But I feel just the opposite. It motivates me to give even more, because I know if the money is needed and there's a cause that they know about, they will give it. And it's for Christian higher education, and I fully support this." It was a unanimous decision to do that.

Mr. Smith explains his role in a different form of stewardship, that of the donor accomplishing his or her giving objectives for the purpose of Christ's work on earth through Heartland:

Some people don't like fundraising because they think it's manipulation. My personal philosophy is that any individual has a finite number of relationships with people that they trust that represent causes they believe in. If you have someone that has a large net-worth, they need my help to further the Kingdom. It's not twisting their arm at all; it's coming alongside them and helping them to do what God has laid on their hearts to do. That's why you and I both have the experience where we take checks from people and they thank us for taking the check, because we've helped them. Many of them, God has given the gift of generosity, gift of giving. Then God is using us to come alongside them as a trusted friend and a confidante and an advisor to help them to best give those resources, which God has blessed them, to further His kingdom. So what I say to my people is they need us as much as we need them.

HU expresses its stewardship to all donors through its annual report. This includes an update of how gifts have advanced the institution's mission and those individuals who have been a part.

Mr. Bailey believes institutional stewardship is a moral responsibility that cannot

be ignored at Western Denominational University, regardless of future donor intent:

Even if they never give again, we have an obligation to keep them posted on the results of their stewardship. So even if they never give us another dime, there is, I believe, a responsibility for us to continue to show them the results of their commitment and their stewardship.

Stewardship is good practice in encouraging additional gifts or, at least, moral goodwill from those who seek to steward the resources of which they've been entrusted.

### Chapter Summary

Evangelical institutions employ several strategies and processes to secure major gifts from alumni. They begin by attracting givers. As noted in Chapter I, 11.0% of alumni gave to their alma mater in 2008 (Kaplan, 2009, p. 10), indicating that most alumni don't give to their alma mater. But some will. And of those who do, some merit investment in relating the institution's vision to the prospect's individual vision for giving a major gift to his or her alma mater. When the institution's vision becomes digested by the prospect, it becomes time to invite his or her investment in a meaningful way.

As revealed in the next chapter, givers are not born; they are developed. Part of this is hopefully accomplished through the education of one's alma mater. Expressions of compassion for the hurt, justice for those offended, and general service to those in need all cultivate altruistic impulses, and are fundamental antecedents to financial giving.

What causes an altruistic response as one interacts with the less-fortunate? It is an ability to identify with them and the needs they possess. One can see himself or herself in the same position with the same desire for assistance. Alma mater can become that entity with which one identifies and the needs it presents. It may have provided one's college experience. It may have provided assistance through someone of a prior generation. And

now, it asks for assistance in making the education of the next generation possible. Such an argument is logical, but does it elicit a positive gift response on its own? It depends on the respondent's identification, both cognitively and emotionally, with the need and opportunity. This identification is grown through a mix of affinity outreach, branded messaging, and meaningful and manageable opportunities for investment. Together, these processes can "attract" alumni to remain or become vested stakeholders in their alma mater once again.

The preceding activities are directed toward large audiences. They intend the deepest degree of relationship possible with the alumni constituency en-masse. Social networking through Facebook and individual alumni online communities are allowing deeper relationships to be generated more cost-effectively with greater alumni control. These connections are important not only to building a major-donor base, but also to meeting annual fund goals. Resource scarcity dictates, however, that relating institutional vision in a more personal way requires intentional prospect selection of individuals with capacity and propensity to give larger gifts. These individuals deepen their relationships with the institution and other like-minded friends of the institution through special events. These social gatherings typify the notion that "the medium is the message." Program is matched, if not overshadowed, by other interests of the participants: Who was there, what did they say, what was the aesthetic of the event, and did it end on time? It is through the personal relationships, however, where the complexity of an individual's interest and its alignment with institutional vision is sought, pondered, developed, and tested.

After all that is done to relate vision, inviting investment can simply seem to be a matter of course. In a deep and trusted relationship with someone who understands this alignment of personal values and institutional vision and possesses the confidence to ask, inviting investment is simple. The solicitor can be a friend, volunteer, or institutional representative, whether staff or administrator. His or her ability not only to ask, but also to sense the prospect's readiness to be asked and what the prospect's response is are critical to keeping a proposal alive. A prospect who is willing to negotiate is often one who is willing to give. The question is whether he or she will bargain for more than is in the best interest of the institution and whether the institution will do the same. As an agreement is reached, the institution's stewardship of the gift to the donor will determine whether it might receive another investment again in the future.

These are the strategies and processes institutions in this study employ to secure major gifts from alumni. The next chapter addresses what motivates alumni to give and their perceptions of institutional influence.

CHAPTER FIVE  
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION  
ALUMNI MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS AND PERCEPTIONS OF INFLUENCE

Introduction

Chapter Four addresses the strategies and processes institutions employ to secure major gifts from select alumni of evangelical institutions. These relate to the first research question of this study, which is:

1. What processes do evangelical institutions employ to engage selected alumni for the purpose of encouraging a major financial donation to their alma mater? What institutional strategies are identified for each engagement process?

Findings from interviews of three presidents and three chief development officers at three separate CCCU institutions reveal three strategies and 10 processes. The three strategies are attracting givers, relating vision, and inviting investment. Processes related to the strategy of attracting givers involve engaging alumni according to institutional affinity, providing meaningful giving opportunities, and expressing a compelling, mission-oriented message. Processes for the strategy of relating vision include prospect segmentation, conducting special events, and making personal connections. Processes pertaining to the strategy of inviting investment include utilizing volunteers, sensing prospects, negotiating gifts, and stewarding gifts.

This chapter seeks to understand the motivational factors that both encourage and discourage alumni giving. These relate to the second and third research questions of this study, which are:

2. What factors do alumni identify that would motivate them to provide a major financial gift to their evangelical alma mater? What factors motivate them not to give?
3. What are alumni perceptions of their evangelical alma mater's ability to build relationships with alumni that motivate them to contribute a major gift?

The second research question looks at factors alumni identify that would motivate them to provide or not provide a major financial gift to their alma mater. Inherent in these findings is evidence related to the third research question, which focuses specifically on how alumni perceive institutional relationships on motivation to give. Because of the relationship of the second and third research questions, the findings from both are outlined and discussed together in this chapter.

#### Description of Alumni Major Donor Respondents

Bill Mathews, Greg and Carla Oswald, and Wayne Williams are four respondents from Heartland University. Mr. Mathews is a retired small business owner and has volunteered at HU in alumni relations and fund raising. Mr. and Mrs. Oswald own a holding company that is involved with several enterprises, and Mr. Oswald serves on HU's board of trustees. Mr. Williams has some business interests and serves as a member of HU's faculty.

Bruce Miller, Taylor and Janice Simpson, and Vince and Susan Swanberg are five respondents from Northern Metro University. Mr. Miller is retired from a business his parents began and has had little to no volunteer involvement with NMU. Mr. and Mrs.

Simpson currently run a small company and have also had little to no volunteer involvement with NMU. Mr. Swanberg is a retired state university registrar and Mrs. Swanberg is a retired homemaker. Neither has had much volunteer involvement with NMU.

Darren King, Dean Newman, and Gerald Sampson are the three respondents from Western Denominational University. Mr. King is a partner in a commercial real estate company and has little to no volunteer involvement with WDU. Mr. Newman owns a group of enterprises and has served on WDU's board of trustees, its foundation board, and was a member of its faculty. Mr. Sampson owns a commercial real estate management company, has served on WDU's board of trustees, and is a former administrator.

#### Motivational Factors for Alumni Major-Gift Donors

Interviews with nine alumni who have donated major gifts of \$1,000 or more generated the following four motivational themes: Belonging, Stewarding, Believing, and Valuing. The descriptions from interview data that follow bring definition and dimension to these motivational themes, including instances in which individuals might be motivated not to give.

##### Belonging – “I am part of something”

There is a saying that “no man is an island.” Human beings have varying degrees of commonality with one another, whether biological through family, geographic through community, or through values, beliefs, experiences, or mortality. Combining and intensifying any of these dimensions of affinity create a bond that is tighter and more



compelling to fulfill whatever purposes it might pursue. Such bonds constitute a sense of belonging, a theme that motivates alumni donors to give.

Bill Mathews, a donor respondent, expresses how he perceives the bond he has formed with his alma mater, HU:

It's the understanding of the organization, and part of it that makes you (who you are). (You) are part of it because it's part of your life. And the emphasis that we got, the information and the education that we got is a part of our lives. You can't discount that.

For Mr. Mathews, an inextricable relationship with the university forms when one realizes how the university was instrumental in forming his or her character and intellect.

Taylor Simpson, a donor respondent from NMU, sees the value of his connection with his alma mater more in terms of common and enduring cultural values:

It's a place to not only connect, and Janice mentioned the [particular national] heritage, but it's reinforcing that we're Northern Metro. We stand out because a little bit of our heritage, a lot because of the Christian faith, and it's a constant. We're in an institution that we have our foundation. We know what we are. We know who we are. We're comfortable with it. We help educate kids well. And there's not a lot of change every year. We're not on the latest new thing every year. So for us it's not just that, but it shows that continuity from year to year. It gives us an opportunity to go on campus and see the campus and meet people.

What Mr. Simpson describes borders on an adopted family. Add the dimension of biological family, as Bruce Miller, a donor respondent from NMU, did, and the bond, as noted previously, becomes still more powerful:

One thing that's influenced us greatly to give to Northern Metro is not only did I go there, but my oldest daughter graduated with a degree in nursing from there and my son-in-law transferred there in his freshman year, the one that married her, and he graduated from Northern Metro. And one of my sons went there for the first year of his education, and his wife, who's my other daughter-in-law. She graduated from Northern Metro with a teaching degree. So we've had a lot of our family that's really benefited other than ourselves. It's been there for our kids. One of our granddaughters has also already started there.

The family bond is strengthened further when additional generations are factored, as

Gerald Sampson, a donor respondent from WDU, mentions from his interview:

Most of my time and finances have been directed to the denomination and to the university that have enhanced our lives and we've given back to. So most of them are related to the church, whether the local or the district or the general, and then the university, where I met my wife and my kids attended and met their spouses. We at the university were fourth generation, both sides of our family. So we have a long heritage to be proud of.

When children demonstrate the power to choose the same educational experience as their parents, the value of the parents' choice is reinforced, creating an even more compelling sense of belonging, as Darren King, a donor respondent from WDU implies in the following comment:

“Dad, I’m going to Western Denominational.” And you know I told her? “I’m not going to give you any direction. I want you to go. You’ve worked hard. You got great grades. I want you to go where you want to go.” “I want to go to Western Denominational.” It’s been a fabulous experience.

What is it about an educational experience that provides a sense of belonging with others? A common cognitive experience seems insufficient to warrant Bill Mathews' previous response. While more ethereal, growth of a unified heart, soul, and purpose are more connective, resembling more the “family” that is meant by belonging. Add the dimension of biological family that has chosen and continues to choose the values and beliefs of alma mater “family” that will guide a child or grandchild’s life, and belonging possesses the potential to become sublime.

#### Stewarding – “I manage what I am entrusted”

The parable of the talents in Mathew 25 describes well the role of a biblical steward. He risks investment for a return that enriches his master. And what if he does

not? He reaps the consequences of his master's judgment, which includes condemnation and reallocation of his talent to those who already have more.

Some Christians would incorrectly interpret this story to mean the wealth they possess and continue to grow is for their sole utilization because of their righteousness before God. Such an interpretation ignores the spirit of the allegory: Whatever is possessed must be invested. This is the burden of a steward. Only then does he or she find his or her righteousness before God. Such responsibility to invest a part of God's resources for His purposes was evident in each individual donor case and was a factor in their respective giving situations.

But a steward isn't born. Because "investing," or surrendering control of one's possessions, is unnatural to human behavior, it is a discipline that must be learned and developed. Mr. Mathews describes his measured approach at HU:

But the first gift was tough. No question about that. But then you see yourself available to do a little bit more as you have contributed, and then you increase that maybe by \$25 or fifty or whatever you do for the (prior) year.

Wayne Williams, a donor respondent from HU, shares how his mother taught him tithing at an earlier stage in life and through the brutal loss of his pet rooster:

So Mother taught me about tithing. You had twelve, and you really owed one to the Lord anyway, and so we'll kill it and give it to the pastor. So my pastor got to eat my rooster, and I learned about tithing.

Vince Swanberg, a donor respondent from NMU, also learned about tithing through the stewardship of livestock:

I guess the first thing that comes to mind when I was about eleven or twelve I was challenged with the business of tithing. My dad had given me a hog to raise. And I raised the hog, and the proceeds were to be mine. So that hog had a litter of little piglets. So I'm beginning to wonder, now, "I'm sure I have to tithe." I know

that's right, but it's sure not easy. And so I remember how I really anguished over that, and I knew that it was right but I really wasn't a cheerful giver. I gave, but with dragging my heels. I just thought, "I know it's the thing to do," but at that point in my life I had kind of went through a thing where I got rid of comic books. I thought they were bad, sinful kind of thing. And so I was pretty committed right there to doing what was right.

Biblical stewardship is a significant commitment as an individual, but can be even more challenging for a married couple unless the value is shared and practiced. Mr.

Miller from NMU describes a practical method:

When we got married we both felt the same way. And we opened up a special checking account at the time we got married in 1958, fifty years ago. And that was called our tithe account, or the Lord's checkbook. And we would always take ten percent of our earnings and dump it in there. And then that account never ran out. And we would, through prayer and stuff; we would decide where the money should go. Not that it was any great sums until just the last few years.

The faith Mr. Miller describes of God's provision and direction with the investment of their charitable funds is similar to the Simpson's, NMU donors, experience:

I think when we made our decision thirty years ago to give in ten percent of gross, the underpinning of that was all the biblical references about giving and replenishing your storehouses. So I think we both believe that it's not the economy so much that will dictate. We're not worried about not having enough funds, because we believe that there could be times that are leaner than others, but God will always provide. That's one of those things that we just believe it's something that we should do.

At times, Greg Oswald, a donor respondent from HU, says that giving is a necessary practice of faith:

What we got to work on is not so much that we don't mind giving it, but hanging on to everything because we're worried about bad times coming. There's a whole lot of faith here that we got to learn how to be able to say, "You know what, it's okay."

Mr. Sampson from WDU notes how he and his spouse have adapted between

investment of time and financial resources as either have been more plentiful:

Probably the biggest change is as our business has prospered, we've given more monetarily in the later years than we were able to do in the younger years. We gave a lot of our time, maybe more of our time in our younger years, and then we've been able to give more monetarily as the Lord has blessed our work.

Mr. King of WDU expresses the importance of focus of discipline. Being distracted, even by well-intentioned financial practices, can disrupt effective stewardship:

There are a lot of things you cut out. You want to pay off your credit card and get out from under debt, but you don't cut out the tithe. You got to start with giving that tithe. I'm not going to be a hypocrite and say that I'm always or have always been good about it. But I always try to remember that the first fruits are His, not mine.

Some stewards simply seek the promise of an organization's mission when they make an investment, trusting the return to be sufficient. Others, like Mr. Oswald from HU, desire a more concrete measure of investment return. He describes what appeals his giving to an evangelistic organization he supports:

We feel like every dollar that we give to them they in turn invest it and are winning souls. So your dollar is getting lots of bang-for-the-buck.

However, when giving opportunities measurably fail and the return of alternative giving opportunities are tangibly greater, it can be more difficult for donors like Mr. Oswald to live with the results:

But it was kind of hard to go back and not have this bitter feeling of, "I could have taken that money. Look at all these schools we could have started over here, here, here, here."

This instance is evidence of motivation not to give. It is hard for one to practice stewardship with an organization that doesn't appear to practice stewardship itself.

Stewardship is a learned behavior that requires discipline to grow. A steward cultivates an attitude that what he or she has is not his or her own. As this is realized, he or she is able to better trust God's provision and direction with the resources He entrusts. But for those oriented to a measurable return on investment in their wealth generation activities, making such returns clear in a charitable organization ensures a better appeal for the charitable investor.

Believing – “I see something that is good”

Believing is observing and contemplating a mission and concluding it is important. For instance, a pediatric hospital that seeks to save the lives of innocent children diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses is universally considered good. For Mr. King at WDU, he believes in Christian higher education:

But when it comes to the larger items, and specifically when it comes to the largest item on our list today it is Western Denominational University. And the reason I would say is primarily twofold. One: We believe in giving and giving back from what God has blessed us with. Two: We're both strong believers in higher education, specifically Christian higher education.

For Mr. Simpson from NMU, Christian higher education means fostering thinking that is different from secular culture:

But we look at institutions, and some of them start adopting kind of the world's view of things. And it's almost from a Christian organization's perspective you can get so focused on the planet or you can get so focused on reconciliation that you start losing, I'll call it, the salt and the light that you really have in the world. And that's maybe (these organizations') stewardship. I think they almost are giving up the real value they add, and that's the overall principles of Christianity.

This is another instance of evidence of motivation not to give. If a donor perceives a shift in philosophical or theological purpose, it might motivate them not to give.

But believing involves more than finding a mission to be important. It also relates to how the mission is carried out and the people who make it happen. Mr. Miller from NMU shares the appeal of one institution based on how it operates in higher education with Christian values, is distinctively priced, and correspondingly generates even more student demand in the process:

They get it done for about half price, and it's not an inferior education. And so they have a model that's unbelievable. Our son is there. He went to [one sister CCCU institution] first and he loved it there, but he likes [another CCCU institution] more because of the quality of the students. All of them want to go there because of the price. And so he feels that they really, really get students that really, really want to go to college, badly.

Mr. Mathews is one who had believed in the work of HU, in part, because of the people that exemplified the loyalty and passion for the mission to be accomplished well:

But that's a motivating factor in itself. He was such a gifted person that the Lord used. He never had another job in his life. But when you travel 13,000 miles with a man that is such a determination that he's given his life to the university, no matter what they were paying him it wasn't enough because it was just his attitude. And people loved him everywhere he went because of his smile.

Mr. Oswald, too, is inspired by the passion of the people behind the work at HU:

I was just thinking, and maybe it's just me because he says I'm a compassionate person, but I feel like most people will give because that's where their heart is. Your heart has to be there. And more and more things that you go to if you just hear a lot of statistics it just kind of like, "Okay, yeah, yeah." But if you hear personal testimonies of people, you're a lot more likely to give to that institution.

Mr. Swanberg at NMU values the competence and care of faculty:

I guess the quality of the education that students get there. I know you can go anywhere and get good academic education. But when you go to Northern Metro, and I'm sure other Christian schools, too, the faculty is the key. And it's not just that they're highly trained in their fields, but there's something beyond that. There's a caring that you feel that they have for the students. I know you have them in the secular school, too. But it was just a different atmosphere.

Mr. Williams at HU found his inspiration not only to give financially, but to dedicate his career to teaching thanks to a faculty member who was a model for him and encouraged him in his academic work:

When Miss Edwards helped me find myself, I became so convinced that people who would normally fall to the wayside in a state school can be picked up when some professor loves God so much she says, "I want to help you."

Believing involves not just mission, but also the process by which the mission is accomplished and the people who fulfill it.

#### Valuing – "I make a difference"

Making a difference is often necessary to motivate someone to make a contribution. Does what they give matter? For some, this is a rational question of return on investment or impact. For others, the question alludes to a simple appeal to one's ego.

Effective expression of value often involves the ethos of the messenger more than it does the message itself. Mr. Williams from HU just noted the impact of a faculty member upon his vocation. Therefore, it seems natural Mr. Williams might afford his beloved professor the same influence upon his investment of money, as he suggests:

"Nothing but Laurel Edwards. Of course, Hank Neeson was the main fundraiser, but I never responded to that" (p. 11).

Such people become so trusted because they give evidence that their values are aligned with the donor's and that they have the donor's best interests at heart. As Mr. Simpson from NMU notes, they become like family:

I think the unique thing that Christians have, and I think Northern Metro does it well, is that we're all kind of one family, in essence. You relate on a different level, which I think is really nice. We talk about giving on an annual basis with people from Northern Metro, and at some point in time you do some estate



planning, too. If you have that connectedness on a little deeper level, you're more inclined to think about giving part of your estate to a school like that.

Like family, these people are intentional about pursuing a relationship, something Mr.

King of WDU experienced with Jacob Wilson:

So Jacob is Mr. Follow Up and Mr. Follow Through. And he did. And he called me. "Darren, I haven't met you, but I want to meet you." That was over, relatively speaking, a relatively minor gift. I think it was \$5,000 or something. Jacob developed a relationship. He pursued me.

And family can possess the ability to extend a challenge. A challenge may not necessarily be one that is directed at an individual donor. But as a challenge is understood to be real to the institution, the indirect, latent burden is felt by the donor, as

Mr. Swanberg notes that an NMU gift officer successfully shared:

From my perspective, I think representatives make quite a difference. They come out and they see you and they visit with you, and they let you understand that it's important. I felt that that has been a significant thing.

For Mr. Newman at WDU, the challenge of a gift to break ground on a new building was conveyed with no expectation that he or any other board committee member would respond as Mr. Newman eventually did:

And so it was at that meeting that the real need was presented, not to us but it was presented to us to go find somebody. "If you have anybody, any company you work for or you work with that would have a philanthropic need, we need them right now or this project's not going to go." So I remember that meeting very well. I went up to the vice president afterwards and just asked some specifics, and then left and didn't tell him of our desire till I talked with my wife and family.

Mr. Newman was able to contemplate the value he might bring to the project without the pressure of being the object of focus to address the institutional challenge.

Effective expression of value also involves the message. A constant message of asking for support without space for telling of the support's impact or thanking for that

support breeds a sense of donor fatigue and may motivate a donor not to give. Mr.

Mathews at HU mentions this from a standpoint of relief:

You know what impressed me the most was nobody asked for money at the banquet. And the interesting thing is you're still meeting your goals. So it shows me that it's not necessary to beat somebody in the head with a baseball bat all the time. Boom-boom-boom. It's like a cheerleader constantly cheering, cheering. Pretty soon it gets old, and that's when I think we have played that enough.

Mr. Mathews goes on to explain the negative effects of always asking:

And when I'm on the phone talking to people out there, which I do all the time, "Will you please take me off the list?" (Is a prospect's request). "May I ask you why?" (Is Mr. Mathews' response). "Help us know what's going on here; why do you want to be taken off the list?" And I think that's important for me to know that, plus I need to tell somebody else that what's going on. Because too much information is coming to them all the time with a hand-out.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18, KJ). While the proverb relates to divine revelation, the same principle addresses human behavior.

People need to know that what they give matters. And too much asking with too little thanking makes one suspicious, at best, of the value he or she is really contributing or, at worst, the organization's capacity to be worth believing. The individuals who convey that message, the way the message is conveyed, and the message itself are all factors in one's sense that what they do makes a difference.

Motivation to give is a complex psychological phenomenon. Therefore, many interview responses relate to more than one motivational theme and are described in the following sections that juxtapose each theme with another. As a result, this study is able to portray a fuller understanding of the motivations behind its participants and to exhibit the complexity of motivation to give.

Belonging and Stewarding – “I am responsible to more than me”

Some comments exhibit both a motivation to belong and to steward. As noted previously, the idea of belonging means one’s identity is somehow interrelated with others. This identity can be self-serving, such as perpetuating a sense of personal pride. But when moored to the concept of stewardship, the “action” of belonging, investing in that of which I’m a part, becomes more altruistic, like being “my brother’s keeper.”

As belonging increases the awareness that one is part of something he or she has benefited, the sense of stewardship encourages giving back. Mr. Mathews finds motivation to do this through his connection with others who are also committed to providing HU students with scholarship support:

We go to a meeting where the Triangle Society will meet, and that’s people who have given to scholarship funds. I’m amazed at how many people are there with the same mental attitude. That’s their drive. Heartland, oh man, let’s go.

NMU’s Mr. Simpson has a daughter with special needs that causes him to consider her personal development. He therefore seeks to align the investment of his charitable resources where there can be synergy between the purposes of Christ and his responsibilities as a father:

I think we’re more educated than we used to be when we first started out giving. Definitely, because we have a learning-disabled child, we probably would not have chosen that as an area to give, and so we’re very, very engaged in that. So that factor changed (our interest).

Dean Newman, a donor respondent, personalizes his affection for his WDU educational experience and his sense of responsibility to give back:

I should not have been able to attend a private university, and so I have always felt a great debt to somebody who provided funds to allow me to go.

Mr. Newman's college roommate still works at WDU as a faculty member. The commitment of this friend to live a life less compensated by the riches of this world has motivated Mr. Newman's expression of stewardship to WDU:

My college roommate still teaches at Western Denominational. He's never had another job. We both came as seventeen year olds, and he's never left. And so he and his wife both teach there, and we always see the type of choices they make.

One becomes educated in the needs and opportunities of a cause by belonging.

This motivates Mr. Oswald's support of HU and other organizations because it helps him be a better steward:

We've gone over, been involved with them. And so we give a support to these missionaries almost one-on-one, so we have a connection there with them.

Stewardship is cultivated through belonging. Mr. Sampson refers to the modeling of his family, something that has influenced the direction of his stewardship at WDU:

My grandfather was a general officer in the church. He was a minister and started a lot of churches. I've always admired his work. My uncle was an attorney that gave a lot of his time and legal advice to the district and university and the denomination as a whole.

Mr. King of WDU speaks of the modeling of his church as an influence in his stewardship:

Get a check for \$200. You multiply that by 10%. 10% is \$20. You put it in the tithing envelop. You wrote your name and the amount, and you put it in the plate. That was the first money from that check. That was the idea.

Belonging, previously described, speaks of people and organizational groups. But

Mr. Mathews at HU also sees "the part of something" he is to also be spiritual:

It's a mental and a heart thing. It's a heart thing because you are so committed to the Lord that your heart is in whatever he wants in your life and whatever comes along, it's his. So you work it out with him.

“Committed to the Lord” implies a sense of belonging, and such a belonging fosters stewardship like none other. Heartland’s Mr. Williams came to realize what “belonging to the Lord” meant through several life-threatening experiences. He relays a conversation he had with God after the most recent incident:

Well, I had a conversation with God on the way home, and I said, “Are you trying to tell me something, Lord?” And it seemed he said to me, “Wayne, you act like sometimes I don’t exist. I want you to know I’m here. I want you to come to me whether you think you need me or not.” And I said, “God, I will never look at life the same way.”

A generous steward risks the public understanding of his or her capacity to give within the group to which he publicly belongs. Mr. Newman experienced this unintended consequence in his giving experience at WDU:

When it was very public we gave a gift, I got letters from clear back in your neck of the woods from widows saying, “If you can give that much money, can you just pay my rent this week and this month?” And that really surprised me.

Leadership gifts are not discouraged by instances such as Mr. Newman’s, but they might motivate individuals to seek anonymity as they do choose to give.

Dimensions of belonging include family, organization, and God. They influence stewardship, causing one to direct that in which they are entrusted toward the causes in which they find their being.

#### Belonging and Believing – “I want to be good”

Not all associations are with something in which we believe. Some relationships are dysfunctional, and yet we might still choose to enable them. Some, however, are a source of pride and inspiration. They are with individuals and groups of people who

share our common values. They somehow make us better, ourselves. This is the crossover point between belonging and believing.

Sharing common values can strengthen a bond in a way that takes on a sense of family. This sense of family personalizes the motivation to help others in need, as it did

Mr. Oswald at HU:

I've noticed a lot of pastors and missionaries and college professors at Heartland that don't have any equity or don't have much of net worth when it comes to their retirement years, and now they're down there and they can't even move into our own church related community. They can't afford it. Something's wrong.

Family members, themselves, can indeed reinforce this connection with one another and with something that they share a common value. Mr. and Mrs. Miller's sense of belonging at NMU was reinforced by their developing giving relationship and their appreciation for NMU's mission:

I think we started giving to Northern Metro right away. My wife could probably tell me for sure. And of course as, you know, that's almost fifty years ago now. It wouldn't have been a lot at first, but we did. For many, many years it was at the \$500-level, then \$1,000. I think we're up to a \$2,000-\$3,000. Last year gave more substantial gifts because of the opportunity for tax reasons. But we gave to our alma mater almost right away, feeling that giving back to a school that I was very pleased had given me a good, Christ-like, broad education. And to keep the college going.

Mrs. Swanberg appreciated NMU early on because of the way the school's leadership represented itself to her father:

Sven Lindbergh came down to our house, and he visited with us and visited with my dad. My dad thought he walked on water. And those were the people, I think, that had a big impression on me. Not that they were so well educated, but their humility and that they were humble servants. And they never came on as if they were too educated to talk to somebody. They were always very kind and approachable.

Like Mrs. Swanberg, Mr. King Values the way WDU reached out to him. But it was a combination of actual family and others who were vested in WDU's mission that seemed like family that reinforced Mr. King's belief in what WDU is accomplishing:

Jacob invited us to the ribbon-cutting grand opening of the Frank Business School. Took my daughter, Kristen, who was a junior or senior. Jacob had us to the lunch. They gave us a gift. Got to meet Dr. Bailey. And my daughter got to see the campus. And all of a sudden, not only did I realize, but she realized what that money had done. And you looked at this. It's like, look at the kids' who will now be able to stay at Western Denominational and get a business degree because people cared to give. Had it not been for people, Gerry Frank, primarily, but for people that cared, there wouldn't be a Frank School of Business. It was just an overwhelming experience.

Mr. Newman found the influence of people who were not alumni of WDU but were people WDU would proudly claim to provide a powerful association for other non-WDU alumni:

So one of the things that I thought was good, we discontinued. We had what was called Challenge America Award, and did it for several years. They would bring in somebody, a major national known Christian, and give them a Challenge America Award and have a large banquet and attempt to bring in potential donors and get them to see the university is tied in with some very big names. [Former U.S. Attorney General]. [evangelical radio broadcaster], who is an alum. And let me see if I can think of the other one or two. [Founder of large campus ministry]. Those type of people. They only went four or five years at the most, but I thought those were important before I ever made my gift. It really gave you the sense of what you were giving to. There you were with people, other successful people in that room.

Association is made stronger when it is between people who share belief in the mission of something. When this mission is something people would have experienced first-hand, the bond with one another and belief in the mission become tighter still.

Belonging and Valuing – “The value I bring reinforces the part I am”

It is said that the only thing some people have in common is a task they share. If one is able to give of himself or herself, he or she becomes vested in the group with which he or she co-labors. Knowing that a contribution makes a difference helps tighten the connection one feels to a group, organization, or cause. Conversely, being a part makes known the value one can bring. Mr. Mathews of HU describes the concept well:

When you're involved with them, it's like any organization, when you're involved, you're very aware of the needs that are there. And you get involved because of the institution, its goals and direction it's going. And that's the reason you're involved. And, of course, that makes you want to give.

Mr. and Mrs. Oswald of HU differentiate their level of giving by their involvement:

The other smart thing, I think, is probably all the places we give the most, the big chunks, not the little stuff, but the big ones, we're both involved.

Mr. Oswald goes on to say that larger involvement rightly means larger responsibility:

I think it's okay for institutions to give suggestions of what people should give, because a lot of times we don't have any idea. So Heartland has set out different levels of giving, saying, “You know if you're board level or trustees level or a, this is kind of what we're expecting.”

Having been involved on both the foundation and trustee board of WDU, Mr. Newman was ready to assume a higher level of responsibility with the lead gift he provided for one of the school's buildings. But the value he contributed was more than the gift:

That was, I remember, sort of the sales pitch, the closing argument for the name. Because you, as an alum, will be the first real alum that's stepped up in the history of the school. A lot of people come in, but the school trained a lot of ministers and teachers, and they don't have the ability to make major gifts. So they encouraged us.

Mr. Sampson reflects on the various WDU connections that reinforced his decision to



provide a lead gift:

The theology/religion department was clear off in the back corner of the campus, an old, dilapidated building. They wanted to bring it front and center as you come into the campus. I really liked that idea. But they challenged. My district superintendent actually had lunch with me and challenged me to make the main dollar lead gift, and I kind of laughed at the time because I'd never given that much in any one gift. So he planted the seed, and then Dean, of course, has given substantially to the college and he's not only a business partner but a friend and a confidante. And he encouraged us to go ahead and make that commitment. Our business was being blessed more and more each year, so we did make that commitment. My son is on staff here in the local church, and he went through that department. So that was kind of another good reason to participate in that particular project.

What does "belonging" look like? All of the preceding testimonies allude to family and organizational involvement. But some, while they have financial resources, don't have the time to belong in such a way. The value they bring needs to be thoughtfully expressed. While events don't usually possess such power, the Swanbergs describe what others have experienced about NMU's annual Christmas festival:

The other thing Northern Metro has done that I think is nice is they invite us back to the Festival of Christmas, for example. There's a smorgasbord afterwards, and that's a time, really a nice time at Northern Metro, a nice time to be there. You meet lots of folks. We know it costs money. I mean, it's an expensive thing for Northern Metro to do, but you feel kind of connected even through things like that.

Mr. Miller looks for a more personal touch:

In my case, our decision to give to Northern Metro and a couple other Christian colleges really isn't determined by the literature they send out. It's important that they have a contact, a personal contact, through an individual that you grow to know over the years.

The value one brings to an organization certainly reinforces the part he or she becomes within the organization. Being a part of the organization often helps one to understand the opportunity he or she has to make a difference.

Stewarding and Believing – “I invest what I have in what is good”

A wise investor wishes only to place personal resources into something that will generate a return. Believing in a cause, both its mission and its capacity to deliver that mission, can motivate a steward to take a calculated risk on his or her investment. As Mr. Mathews of HU infers, such a belief can be consumptive:

But when you think about the involvement of people like all of these guys and gals, it's part of them. They can't think of anything else. It's them and Heartland.

And where you find one's heart, you also find what he or she possesses. This is true for Mr. Swanberg:

And I also think that we've looked at some of these places and we always have considered Northern Metro and the Conference as good stewards of the Lord's money. And we don't feel if you give something, it's not going to go to the cause that you give it to. I think that's really helped and encouraged.

And it is for Mr. Sampson at WDU, too:

The financial gift was just a natural outgrowth of our love for the university and our belief that they're headed in the right direction. Being involved with planned giving and encouraging others to give, I was the finance chairman in our local church for years, and of course giving was always something that I preached and tried to live. So giving when we were able just kind of came naturally, but it was out of the love for and the feeling that they're doing the right things.

Building such beliefs takes many forms. For Mr. Miller, it was a favorite professor who reinforced his decision to invest resources at NMU:

I had one extremely favorite professor at Northern Metro. And I somehow related well to him, and I didn't start giving to Northern Metro because of him, but I think his influence as to my purpose in life and stuff really influenced me. Dr. Bill Sanders, he remains my favorite professor, other than my son now, of course. And I have some of the old tapes and everything. He's passed on. Anyway, I think that was an influence during that time, and even afterward, and knowing there were such godly professors.

For Mr. King at WDU, the risk of investing is relatively low because he sees it as a partnership, where the institution already bears quite a bit of risk to exist; he's merely playing a part in something in which he already believes:

I guess I want it to be a partnership. The people that run the university in its day-to-day operations, they are committed. From a timeframe standpoint there, they're committed. They need other people like me to partner with them to help grow this university. I'm not talking about in numbers, necessarily. I'm not necessarily talking about in buildings. But to become a better university. To be able to hire the best professors. To be able to have state-of-the-art science facilities. I think I want to be a partner.

An institution that bears that risk well functions well, something that enhances Mr. Newman's belief, and thus capacity to invest:

Western Denominational can be considered to be very affluent. So it's not a down-and-out university. When we gave our large gift it was because there was a need. But it was not to keep the doors of the college open.

Children and grandchildren are a possession many find as a form of investment and also requiring investment. As Mr. Oswald describes, stewarding resources in Heartland, something he and Mrs. Oswald believe in, took on increased importance because it would benefit his children and grandchildren, something else he felt responsible to steward:

The turning point...was when we saw our kids about ready to go there. What value this place was. And now it's our grandkids. Man, it's a real valuable place to us to see that it does well.

Believing and stewarding imply a high degree of emotional and thoughtful intentionality in investing. If both factors are powerful together, they are equally powerful to an organization that betrays those who have been faithful and might motivate

them not to give. Mr. Mathews explains that he couldn't see stewarding his resources at Heartland if it were to alter the spiritual dimension of its mission:

If they would ever get to the place where there would be some real sacrifices in spirituality and involvement in some issues and so forth where that was not what many of us feel are important, I think most of us would say, "Hey, what are you doing?" and maybe stop (giving).

Mr. Miller feels the same about NMU:

That's a question I haven't really thought about a lot. I know what it is in my case. It's having high academic standards coupled with a godly worldview. And if Northern Metro would go away from that, I think they could lose a lot of their givers.

One might find it difficult to believe in an institution if it doesn't appear capable of handling its own resources. Mr. Oswald was understandably frustrated when Heartland wouldn't provide his diploma because of a student account balance. When he made the requested payment, he then learned he overpaid:

"We made a mistake. You don't owe any money. You overpaid. Would you like us to donate the money to Heartland, to donate half of it, or receive a full immediate refund?" Well, you can imagine, I was not a happy camper. I said, "Immediate refund."

Heartland has clearly done well overcoming its negative reputation from this incident with Mr. Oswald, but the inconvenience that was caused him at the time provided no incentive to give. Another question of resources has to do with endowments. While institutions see them as tools for maintaining affordable quality education, people like Mrs. Simpson view them as mechanisms for reducing accountability and motivate her not to give to them:

For me, I'm not keen on endowments because I think they give too much power to the educators to change the missions. Once you don't have to go out and ask people for funds you can take that school and move it any direction you want. It's

the having to go back year after year that makes you accountable, and an endowment does not make a school accountable. And so I think that's one area I would never give in.

The Simpsons of NMU are not passive stewards. They are careful to monitor the work of the organizations they support:

We've dropped a couple. If they don't agree with our viewpoints, we don't continue to support them. But pretty much they've stayed by and large pretty much consistent. And some of them we've given to for well over 25 years. But we don't hesitate that if they aren't going in the right way, we aren't going to continue to support them. So we kind of try to monitor that a bit.

Because resources are scarce, people like the Simpsons find being a good steward means being faithful to investing where they believe a good work is happening. Their point is one that few can argue with.

Stewarding and Valuing – “The difference I make validates my investment”

A steward wishes to know the return on his or her investment. Knowing this return makes him or her more inclined to invest again. This notion was evidenced with the interview respondents.

Mr. Mathews refers to the good use which Heartland has made of his investment in student scholarships:

We donated a sizeable contribution in order to establish a scholarship fund that three students enjoy, (providing) \$1,500 (each). That's developed, and the amount has just been amazing, what they've done with that amount of money we gave. And to think they gave three scholarships for \$1,500 (each) is amazing in itself. So our involvement is much more than most people would think and know about because it's in our hearts and our minds.

Seeing how he has helped make a Heartland education possible, Mr. Mathews clearly sees the possibility for how he could impact other students should he choose to give

again. Like Mr. Mathews, Mr. Newman of WDU made his sizeable gift during life, which enabled him to see its impact upon students:

I'm a real believer in that. It's pretty easy to give a legacy gift when you're gone and your family may know it. But it's been a wonderful, sort of a life-changing thing, for me to see the results of the gift.

When told of a gift-matching opportunity, Mr. Williams of HU, a charitable steward, became even more committed to making an investment:

I even gave a house because [local foundation] would double the amount given. Because Mr. Williams works at Heartland, he's inclined to know of such giving opportunities. But not everyone does, and being reminded is important, particularly for people like the Swanbergs:

The gift officer we know reminds us of what's going on at Northern Metro, what the needs are, expansion that's going on, sort of an update of what's happening there and why it's important. And he talks about the ministry and the programs and the mission of the place. Those are factors I think are important. Without that, I don't know that it would happen like it does. I think you need that contact. I think you need that ongoing contact with somebody that's really connected there.

Mr. King is quite enthusiastic about WDU's expression of the value he has provided, and eagerly anticipates the opportunity to do more:

I called up and I got a hold of this guy named Dr. Jacob Wilson. Never met the guy. Said, "This is what I want to do." He was terrific. Helped me. Thanked me. Wrote me a thank you note. Began sending me information on the university. And the next year we had a better financial year in our family, and I said I want to give. At that point Jacob said, "Can I come up and visit you?" And he did, and he said, "Let me tell you about what we're doing." That's really what did it.

The intentional engagement has been Mr. Sampson's experience of WDU, too:

They do a good job of encouraging. Once you make any type of a donation, they cultivate it. They do a pretty good job of staying in contact, communicating with

you, involving you in decision making, at least in my case. Being a member of the denomination that supports the college, I probably have more input than if I were, say, a Baptist student that went through and maybe wasn't as heart-deep in the university as I am.

Sometimes the investment one is willing to make goes beyond finances. Those who are able to provide for the full range of one's investment desires, such as Mr.

Simpson's at NMU, may experience more meaningful financial support:

I wouldn't mind getting involved in donating time to help with strategic planning. I do some of that stuff in business. I told him I've got a business background. If they're always looking for folks that are committed to the school or donors to the school, to get involved in business programs to help mentor kids or whatever, I think they could do some of that. I wouldn't mind getting involved at different levels within the school to help them, maybe, carry some of my passions or our passions through to the school and help them do that. If they said, "Yeah, we'd love to create some kind of curriculum so we can take in kids with some learning disability issues and help them through," we'd probably donate funds and time and try to help them do something like that. So I think from an alumni standpoint there's probably willingness to engage at different levels, and they probably could make use of the alumni talent that's out there.

Gifts that are valued, particularly beyond the monetary, contribute to one's sense of stewardship of resources. The more encompassing impact they can have, the more likely the donor is to invest more fully of himself or herself.

Believing and Valuing – "What is nobler than impacting something that is already good?"

The ability to impact something one already believes in is the ultimate "sweet spot" of giving. If one really believes in an organization's mission and the execution of that mission, being valued is the kindling that can ignite substantial investment. Mr.

Oswald of HU shares a compelling case:

We had a missionary come to us from India. He's in what they call the "missionary graveyard." He was in this area of India for ten years and not one soul got saved. And he decided, "What am I doing here?" And he is Indian, but

he prayed to God and said, “Listen, if I’m here, I’ve got to see some fruit here or I might not stay, I shouldn’t stay.” 10 years you don’t see any fruit. But he got started into doing education for kids, and the Indians accepted that, and they said...where he was being persecuted before, because he’s not Hindu, now he’s helping India by helping put in good education for the kids. The Hindus start sending their kids to his schools. And before long, out of the schools would branch out churches. And he’s got, I don’t know, 10, 20 churches and schools all in this area? And he came and told me, he said, “For \$5,000, I could start a new school, and in one year with \$5,000, it will become self-sufficient. No more money has to go into that school. And from that we will gain five or 10 churches.” I couldn’t wait to give him the money. I said, “Let me write the check right now! Here it is!”

In this instance, philosophy, efficiency, effectiveness, and specificity of investment all align for Mr. Oswald. He sees something good, and he sees how he can play a part in making it even better.

A sacrificial gift often affords influence upon an organization, whose mission inspired the gift in the first place. This is true of Mr. Williams’ gift of service and money to Heartland:

I got a letter from Barry Smith. “Wow, you gave your whole salary last year.” Well, I’ve been doing it for fourteen years. But I don’t need the money, so why should I make the money? And it gives me such credibility with students. “I do it for nothing because I care about you.”

Mr. Newman also experienced this impact with students at WDU:

The result of it has been greater influence with students. Some with other people, but it’s just amazing with an old person talking to students, they’re not listening. But for some reason, because you were a celebrity for a while, I was a celebrity for a while, they would listen. And you can help direct them and be involved in their lives and sometimes help them in their business.

Believing in something so deeply and seeing value in one’s contribution to it can drive an introspection that engenders even greater generosity, as it did with Mr. King of WDU:

“Jacob, we’ll go to \$100,000. We’ll go to \$100,000.” And one thing that I understand that Jacob understands, and that is that this is an opportunity, a



blessing. And I don't know that I would use the word "acquired," Brian, but it's something God has given. You are blessed. You have means. You live a very comfortable lifestyle. Your kids are healthy. You have a business that's growing. "To him who much has been given, much is expected." But I think the key driver or impetus for this in us is that our heart is with not only Christ, but Christian education. That's our core. That's what we believe in.

Because Mr. Sampson has witnessed in various ways the impact of WDU's mission on students, it has strengthened his belief in what it accomplishes and reinforced the role he has been able to play in its development:

We're just thankful that the Lord's enabled us to do what we've done, and we certainly do it with joy and love and appreciation for what the university means to us. Our church sends tons of kids down there, and you can see the difference being made in their lives. And certainly been impactful in our family and hopefully will continue to be to our grandkids and future generations. So I wouldn't change anything.

There is nothing more meaningful to someone than impacting something that means so much to them. Analogies include developing family and building empires. Whether selfish or altruistic, one's belief in something and vision of opportunity to leverage his or her gifts in its development is powerful.

#### The Effect of Institutional Relationship on Alumni Donor Motivation

The question, "To what extent do you feel your alma mater could realistically motivate an alumnus to contribute a major gift to the institution?" is part of the interview protocol for alumni donor respondents and was asked of each. The responses of alumni are noted in this section according to the motivational theme with which each response most closely relates.

Presence of the motivational factor, Valuing, is evident in several respondents' perception of an institution's capacity to motivate giving. The notion of someone

“making a difference” through their giving becomes known as they are valued. This occurs through the relationship the institution cultivates with the donor, and thus, is the one method among the four motivational factors by which the institution might directly influence major gift support. This was true for Bill Matthews at Heartland University:

Some of those decisions to give are made by getting acquainted with a particular person and trusting in them.

Mr. Mathews’ comment expresses the importance of a developed relationship to the process of influencing a major gift. Carla Oswald, also from HU, responded that “You have to have a relationship,” to influence a major gift. Wayne Wilson from HU implies that the degree of that relationship is powerful in having alumni respond to an appeal in the way the institution hopes:

Barry Smith hasn’t been here long, but Tom Moody is a man that just raised millions for this campus. He was so spectacular at it. He could go and say, “You ought to be able to give this,” and people would do it.

Believing is a predominant motivational factor that both Bruce Miller and Susan Swanson of Northern Metro University cite as institutional influencers on their giving.

Mr. Miller notes the importance of an institution remaining committed to what it has historically believed and what he has known it to be:

That’s a question I haven’t really thought about a lot. I know what it is in my case. It’s having high academic standards coupled with a godly worldview.

Closely related, Mrs. Swanberg sees the quality academic experience, which includes the distinction of Christian care and ideas of faculty at NMU, as important for her:

I guess the quality of the education that students get there. I know you can go anywhere and get good academic. You can get good academic education. But when you go to Northern Metro, and I’m sure other Christian schools, too, the faculty is the key. And it’s that they’re highly trained in their fields, but there’s

something beyond that. There's a caring that you feel that they have for the students.

The other motivational factors, Belonging and Stewarding, are evident in several other responses. Vince Swanberg explains that his relationship with a gift officer helps shape understanding of institutional priorities to fulfill Northern Metro's mission, but the special events also play a role in helping him feel a sense of belonging:

From my perspective, I think representatives make quite a difference. They come out and they see you and they visit with you, and they let you understand that it's important. I felt that that has been a significant thing. The other thing Northern Metro has done that I think is nice is they invite us back to their Christmas festival. We're going tomorrow. And there's food afterwards, and that's a time, really a nice time at Northern Metro, a nice time to be there. You meet lots of folks. We know it costs money. I mean, it's an expensive thing for Northern Metro to do, but you feel kind of connected even through things like that. And I think it's a positive thing. And we know that resources are critical and so on, but there needs to be a balance, I guess. And to me, that's been a nice experience for us.

Janice Simpson from NMU sees the relationship the institution keeps with her important more from the standpoint of being informed than being valued. Its influence on her giving relates to advancing the area she feels particularly called to give, which relates to the field of her son's study:

It probably doesn't matter a lot if a development director sits down with us because we usually know before we go to the development director exactly what we're giving. So it can be somewhat influenced if they show us another opportunity that we'd never been aware of. For example, I didn't even know they had a president's initiative for science. Now that interested me because my son had graduated in applied physics, and I think I'd like to see a little bigger science department and institute of technology and spin it off separately from the liberal arts. I probably will continue to give more to that initiative and less to the unrestricted annual fund.

Gerald Sampson from Western Denominational University has been motivated to give because of the natural relationship he has as an "insider" within the denomination. But

the institution has to express that value to those outside the denomination who are an increasing proportion of alumni who “belong” if it hopes to broaden that influence and support:

The challenges they face are involving those outside our denomination, which is the majority of students there, to connect and to give. So rather than just sending representatives to denominational churches, and I favor this, they’re trying to figure out how to connect with other Christian alums that would support the school that are outside our denomination. That’s the challenge I think Jacob and others are facing. Now, how do we bridge that gap and how do we communicate better with those? There’s already an infrastructure in place for the denominational churches and people, which I’m a part of, and so I don’t think they ought to disband that by any means. But reaching out to more of the alums that had a good experience, encouraging them to financially support the college is what the current goal seems to be. I support that. I think it’s a good.

Taylor Simpson from NMU says the institution influences by its intentionality of stewarding the investments made by donors in their respective areas of interest:

It’s the intrinsic wanting to give, but I think the school can generate a lot interest in certain, specific things. Now it’s going to be different for each person. Like, we may have an interest in physics. Some people might have other interests in the school. It would be nice if Northern Metro provided a newsletter or gave you an update on how they used your dollars.

Greg Oswald from Heartland believes part of the influence an institution has relates to the need for the opportunity it projects, appealing to one’s stewardship for making a difference:

There can be a feeling that there’s not as much need there, because Heartland is so financially successful that my little bit of help isn’t going to make that much of a difference.

The strength of the appeals of the Believing, Belonging, and Stewarding motivational factors noted previously are often most salient in motivating a major gift when expressed personally, which returns attention to the factor, Valuing. Dean

Newman at WDU notes the importance of becoming deeply connected to the institution through a close relationship:

I know that they talk about asking for your friendship before they ask for your funds. Making those contacts are important. I don't know if there's anybody that will ever step-up and give a significant gift until they are absolutely engrained in the institution.

Darren King expresses well the power of the relationship as he tells his perception of WDU's capacity to influence his largest gifts:

To a great extent because they have. I think they have done several things to motivate me, and they're not in any particular order. The follow-up and follow-through, as I mentioned with Jacob. I get letters and notes from Dr. Bailey, the president of the university and am invited to campus events. I was invited to the Bailey's home during Homecoming. They maintain consistent contact with us and let us know what's going on: Not just the newsletter that a lot of people get, but, "this is what's happening at Western Denominational, this is our next project." Jacob would consistently give me updates. E-mail is such an effective way to communicate now. E-mail me. "Here's a picture of the building. We're 50% through." Or, "You're not going to believe this: We just hit our goal and it's all in cash; we're not going to have to borrow any money." Things like that. You don't feel like a donor from the outside. You feel like a participant. And that's important. You feel like, "Now, of course, we're involved." My daughter goes to college there, so you feel like you're a part of the Western Denominational family. But they nurture that at a very early stage.

Of the alumni motivational factors noted previously, Valuing is the one theme that directly relates to an institution actively reaching out to its donor constituency and is most extrinsic to a person's motivation. The respondent data previously noted support the prevalence of this motivational factor over others in directly motivating major gifts, and thus, also suggests that institutional relations do impact motivation to give.

### Chapter Summary

The second and third questions of this study seek to understand what motivates alumni to give in general and the influence of the institutional relationship on that

motivation in particular. Factors of motivation emerging from this study are noted by the thematic labels of Belonging, Stewarding, Believing, and Valuing.

From the standpoint of the individual, Belonging is expressed as “I am a part of something.” While this was expressed in several responses organizationally, the sense of identity really had to do with other people. The institution, or some group within the institution like a graduating class, might be the touchstone. But the touchstone is known through its cultural, religious, and familial identities and by the people responsible for shaping those identities. Attachment to the institution, and the people and values that inhabit it, brings a sense of communal responsibility that plays a role in giving.

“I manage what I am entrusted” is the expression of Stewarding. Many alumni respondents exhibited a Christian understanding of possession management. Their capacity to inherit or generate wealth comes by the grace of God and their loving response involves ultimately giving it all back to God’s purposes. Those purposes include charitable organizations that reflect the values of God, such as missionaries, social and development agencies, and one’s church and alma mater. They also include family. Timing and proportions vary by interpretation and sense of call. Most acknowledged that such behavior is not natural and is realized through disciplined practice. An organization that doesn’t steward its resources well may indeed motivate one not to give.

Believing is expressed by the phrase, “I see something that is good.” Such work is identified by its importance in fulfilling one’s interpreted values of God and the effectiveness by which the work is carried out. Like Belonging, Believing is often

understood through the institution personified in an individual. It might be a faculty member who helped transform an alum's mind through academic instruction or his or her soul by caring for him or her. It might be a current student who exhibits those same characteristics today and reminds the alum of his or her experience. But if the good that is being done alters in terms of values or distinctiveness, it may lose its appeal.

"I make a difference" expresses the label, Valuing. Whether one seeks a specific measure of "return on investment," such as the educational experience a student received that was made possible by a gift, or gestures of gratitude, knowing his or her gift has had an impact is an important motivational factor in giving. This can be accomplished by a fund raising representative, but sometimes it's done better by a person in the institution the donor values, such as a faculty member or student. Sharing such information after a gift has been received is a way of valuing a donor. But ensuring that the prospective donor of a gift, one who has not yet given it, understands the impact his or her gift might have is even more important to securing the gift in the first place. Asking to "make a difference" too much can have negative consequences.

Many responses from alumni interviewed exhibited more than one motivational factor. As noted earlier, this reflects the complexity of motivation to give. Belonging and Stewarding reflect the sense that "I am responsible to more than me." Belonging and Believing reinforce the notion that "I want to be good." "The value I bring reinforces the part I am" typifies Belonging and Valuing. Stewarding and Believing is known by the phrase, "I invest what I have in what is good." Believing and Valuing are expressed as, "What is nobler than impacting something that is already good?"

The third research question of this study inquires whether an institution can influence motivation to give. While all four motivational factors, Belonging, Stewarding, Believing, and Valuing were present in alumni responses, Valuing was found to be most significant to directly encouraging major gifts. Because it is the only factor that directly relates to institutional outreach, it is logical. However, the personal dimension of Valuing was present in many responses. Belonging, Believing, and Stewarding may be enough to make regular contributions to one's alma mater. But to receive the genuinely impactful gifts, someone needs to personally act as an agent of the institution and be available to satisfy the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual needs a prospective donor might have to bring his or her gift to completion.



## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study and the meaning and application of its findings. The overview includes both the context and purpose of the study, the specific research questions it seeks to answer, the method of research, and the study's key findings. Meaning and application of findings include the conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations for fund-raising policy and practice and future research.

#### Summary of Study

##### Context

This study is situated within the context of relational fund raising among alumni of evangelical institutions of higher learning. Understanding this context involves understanding the corresponding dimensions that relate to it. These include the history of philanthropy within American higher education and its current state, theories of motivation for giving, frameworks and practice of fund raising, and evangelical theology of giving and asking.

As the American economy has grown, its cultural value for philanthropy has enabled America's higher education system to grow into the most diverse and strongest in the world. Early settlers understood the importance of higher education and invested

in it, including government bodies. Many colleges were formed and subsequently failed to become financially viable following the American Revolution. Those that survived and those created during the post-Civil War era enjoyed the bounty of Industrial tycoons who enabled the expansion and transformation of the American economy. At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, fund raising became more intentional in higher education with the introduction of consultants and alumni associations. As higher education proliferated to a larger scale after World War II, fund raising professionalized within institutions. Today, higher education fund development has become more sophisticated as more colleges and universities compete for charitable dollars.

Financial resources that have come through charitable support to higher education have represented about 1/10<sup>th</sup> of all voluntary sector giving (Brown, 2008, p. 9; Kaplan, 2009, p. 2) and about 1/10<sup>th</sup> of institutional revenue (Kaplan, 2009, p. 9). These contributions have come largely from individuals, but foundation support has precipitously supplanted individual giving over the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Brown, 2005, p. 56). Large gifts matter, with the value of the three largest gifts by individuals to organizations representing over 1/4 of all individual gifts during life and nearly 2/3 of gifts after death (Kaplan, 2009, p. 15). While dollars given by college and university alumni continue to increase, the number of alumni participating is declining in relation to the total number of alumni (Kaplan, 2009, p. 10). Giving for unrestricted purposes is disproportionately higher for independent colleges and universities than higher education as a whole (Kaplan, 2006, p. 8; Miller, 2001).

According to Schervish (1997), the reasons people give relate more to that with which they identify than altruistic intent. His factors influencing giving include social networks, beliefs and values, receipt and effectiveness of appeals, modeled giving, discretionary resources, demographics, and rewards.

An effective fund-raising program will consider each of the preceding motivational factors. In particular, beliefs, values, and rewards for giving are leveraged by Kelly's (1998) two-way symmetrical model, which posits that donor vision has the greatest capacity to advance an organization's mission through giving. Good fund raising involves strategic planning (Tempel, 2003c), management and leadership (Elkas, 2003), employment of fund-raising methods (Warwick, 2003) and prospect engagement activities (Rosso & Schwartzberg, 2003), and accountability and ethics (Tempel, 2003a).

The preceding elements represent the best-practice for any type of non-profit organization. If an organization is branded as Christian, it should also display a faithful confidence that the same God who envisioned its mission through people who established it delights in providing for its funding through those who value it today.

#### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of the relationship that evangelical Christian institutions of higher education maintain with selected alumni who are major donors to their alma mater. Furthermore, this study examines how the process of developing this relationship may motivate or hinder alumni to make a major gift to the

institution. These purposes are pursued through the following research questions:

1. What processes do evangelical institutions employ to engage selected alumni for the purpose of encouraging a major financial donation to their alma mater? What institutional strategies are identified for each engagement process?
2. What factors do alumni identify that would motivate them to provide a major financial gift to their evangelical alma mater? What factors motivate them not to give?
3. What are alumni perceptions of their evangelical alma mater's ability to build relationships with alumni that motivate them to contribute a major gift?

### Methods Used

This study is based on a case-study design, which investigates the views of alumni who are major-gift donors to evangelical colleges and universities, as well as the presidents and chief development officers of those respective institutions. Three member institutions of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) represent the cases. The cases each involve the collection of a) personal interviews of three and sometimes more alumni, the president, and the chief development officer from each institution, b) fund-raising documents for each school, and c) field notes associated with the data collection process.

Data analysis included a close reading of interview transcripts and fund-raising materials to identify patterns in data and relationships to the research questions and existing literature that represent the context of this study. Triangulation between interview and documentary data and the research literature help ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the study's findings.

### Key Findings

This study seeks to understand the relationship of strategies and processes of fund raising in evangelical colleges and universities to the motives of alumni who give larger gifts. The first research question of this study asks “What processes do evangelical institutions employ to engage selected alumni for the purpose of encouraging a major financial donation to their alma mater? What institutional strategies are identified for each engagement process?” Key findings reveal that institutions seek to attract givers through alumni affinity, provision of meaningful giving opportunities, and expression of a compelling, mission-oriented message. Institutional vision is related through prospect segmentation, special events, and personal contact. Investment in that vision is invited, in part, through volunteers, but also by sensing the motivation of prospects and negotiating and stewarding gifts.

The second research question of this study asks “What factors do alumni identify that would motivate them to provide a major financial gift to their evangelical alma mater? What factors motivate them not to give?” Motivational factors influencing alumni giving emerging from this study are noted by the thematic labels of Belonging, Stewarding, Believing, and Valuing. Belonging is expressed as “I am a part of something;” Stewarding, “I manage what I am entrusted;” Believing, “I see something that is good;” and Valuing, “I make a difference.” Many responses from alumni interviewed revealed more than one motivational factor. Belonging and Stewarding reflect the sense that “I am responsible to more than me;” Belonging and Believing, “I want to be good;” Belonging and Valuing, “The value I bring reinforces the part I am;”

Stewarding and Believing, “I invest what I have in what is good;” and Believing and Valuing, “What is more noble than impacting something that is already good?” There were instances in which motivation not to give was associated with the factors Believing and Stewarding. If the institution failed to advance the values a donor has supported or it failed to implement those values well, the donor would be inclined to no longer give.

The third research question of this study asks, “What are alumni perceptions of their evangelical alma mater’s ability to build relationships with alumni that motivate them to contribute a major gift?” Perception of institutional capacity to motivate giving was present with all four motivational factors, but Valuing was most significant because it relates to institutional outreach and has the most personal effect.

### Conclusions and Discussion

In this section, five conclusions based on this study's findings are discussed in relation to the literature reviewed for the study. First, motivation is complex. Any one theme means something different for each individual and has different influence in relation to the other themes in a decision to give a major gift. Second, the theme, Believing, is a particularly important factor to giving. While it may not always be the most significant factor, the absence of Believing likely motivates one not to give more than any of the other themes. Third, personalized appeal does influence a major gift. Very few major gifts are likely made outside the context of a trusted, personalized relationship with the institution. Fourth, the fund raising strategies and processes of institutions in these cases align with those described in the literature. Fifth, allowing

donors to shape the expression of an institution's mission and seeking to build givers to God, not the organizations that serve his cause, is an art.

### Motivation is Complex

While the four themes of Belonging, Stewarding, Believing, and Valuing address the second research question of this study which focuses on motivation to give, the themes alone do not fully address the complexity of motivation to give a major gift. This complexity is supported by the variation of meaning attributed to each theme by individual donors. Thus, each theme holds different meanings for different respondents. Complexity is further supported by how varied each theme influences each individual's motivation to give. Evidence to support this complexity is also found in the literature related to motivation to give, which is discussed in this section.

Varied meanings can be found for all motivational themes across the group of alumni major-donor respondents. For example, the theme, Belonging, is expressed by the phrase, "I am part of something." The "something" of which these donors are a part is different in each instance. For Bill Mathews of Heartland University, "something" represents the institution, itself. His identity is found through his volunteer association with his alma mater, and that identity is particularly important to his motivation to give. He is proud of HU and what it accomplishes, in part, because *he* is a part of what it accomplishes. He understands the importance of his financial giving to HU, but the skills and experience he is able to contribute are of even greater value to *him*.

The "something" that helps motivate Taylor Simpson's giving to Northern Metro University is being a part of a group of people. Unlike Mr. Mathews, Mr. Simpson's

association has much less to do with institution and more with fellow alumni. This identity is reinforced for Mr. Simpson when he participates in various events like NMU's annual Christmas Festival.

While Gerald Sampson appreciates his alumni association with Western Denominational University, it is the connection he finds to the school through his children's attendance that stimulates his motivation to support the institution. The quality of education each receives is very important to him. "Letting go" of his children to the faculty, staff, and students of WDU is like entrusting his children's continued development to a fellow family member. In turn, because members of Mr. Sampson's family are now members of WDU, WDU is now a member of Mr. Sampson's family.

The preceding examples illustrate how three different notions of the motivational label, Belonging, are conceived for three different alumni donors. Each motivational theme, Belonging, Stewarding, Believing, and Valuing, also appears to exert different influences upon any one person's motivation to give.

Of the three cases of Belonging illustrated above, it resonates most strongly with Mr. Mathews. His personal skills need to be employed and closely married to his gift of giving to encourage his investment.

For Greg Oswald of Heartland University, Stewardship is the theme that generally prevailed above all others in his responses. As a businessman, realizing a financial return on investment is how he has built his wealth. He views his personal abilities and possessions as gifts with which the Lord expects him to be profitable. Consequently, experiencing a measurable human return on investment motivates his charitable giving.



And if the return is not evident, as with his commercial activities, he is inclined to make his charitable investments elsewhere.

Bruce Miller's motivation to give to Northern Metro University is predominantly related to Believing. His support of NMU began modestly as soon as he graduated and has continued in ever-increasing amounts since. His family's attendance reinforces his sense of Belonging, engagement by the NMU development staff helps him see the value of his investment, and he gives with a steward's heart. But NMU's distinct Christian mission, quality education, and attentiveness to personalized student formation all resonate deeply in his motivation to give.

Darren King's motivation to support Western Denominational University is primarily driven by the intentional engagement of the institution. As people from WDU reach out to Mr. King, he becomes more enthusiastic about the school in which he believes, to which he feels he belongs, and to which he's inclined to include in his charitable stewardship. This sense of Valuing that WDU exhibits to Mr. King makes the difference in his motivation to stretch to support the school as he has done.

This complexity is addressed in the literature on motivation for charitable giving. Theorizing seeks to simplify phenomena so they can be studied and understood. Indeed, this was the intent of the four themes that have emerged from this study and that relate to theories that have come before. Schervish (1997) claims eight discreet, quantitatively tested variables help explain the motivation for giving based on identification theory. Because they encompass many of the prior theories of motivation to give, these variables

provide a framework for further theorizing and testing that brings dimensionality to each variable and supports the complexity of giving.

Concerning their relationship to prior theories, Schervish's (1997) *Invitations to Participate, Discretionary Resources, and Urgency and Effectiveness* capture the essence of the theories of pure economic utility maximization that suggest giving decisions are based on maximizing utility for oneself and for those for whom one's gift is served. "Was I asked?" "What might I give?" "Why is it needed now?" "How will it impact according to my values?" These are all questions Schervish's motivational factors address related to gift utility.

Schervish's (1997) *Intrinsic and Extrinsic Rewards* factor moves toward the realm of social exchange theory, where utility is but one motive among the multiple rewards each party might seek in a transaction. One reward serving the motive of utility is the income tax deduction I will receive. But other rewards beyond economic utility include recognition, becoming vested in the cause, and the simple emotional and spiritual peace that comes by the moral choice of realigning resources that Gouldner's (1960) "norm of reciprocity" (Kelly, 1998, p. 45) addresses.

Schervish's (1997) factors involving *Communities of Participation, Frameworks of Consciousness, and Models and Experiences from One's Youth* all generally move beyond utility of and reward for giving to its underlying function of self-identification that is illustrated by the question, "What are my origins, location, and beliefs?"

Schervish has determined that these, along with the other preceding factors, have causal effects on giving. While Schervish's *Demographic Characteristics* factor contributes to

the notion of origins, location, and beliefs, it does so with an explanatory rather than causal effect.

As the single theme, Belonging, covers a multitude of motivations, as noted earlier, so do Schervish's (1997) motivational variables. Combine these with other variables, and the number of possible motivations becomes exponential. This is illustrated by the context of giving among evangelicals to institutions of higher learning. Evangelicals represent one of Schervish's Demographic Characteristics, likely a subset of religion, Christianity, and Protestantism. Schervish would see Frameworks of Consciousness for evangelicals to be similar to other Protestants, Christians, people of religious faith, and even atheists concerning a responsibility to give back to their alma mater. However, the evangelical's reason for that responsibility will be different. While one evangelical may sense a responsibility to give back motivated by a love for God himself who made the education possible, another's responsibility is motivated by love for the students who will enjoy the education he or she did. This is simply examining two of Schervish's variables, and they don't account for how a single person's motivation changes over time.

### Believing is Important

Based upon responses from alumni major-gift donors in this study, presence of the theme, Believing, appears critical to their motivation to give. While it's not always the most important, the complete absence of Believing, which relate to the second half of the second research question of this study, may indeed motivate one not to give. This

finding is also confirmed by the literature on motivation, which is discussed in this section.

There were no instances of the theme, Belonging, where study respondents were motivated not to give. Put another way, absence of Belonging doesn't seem to motivate one not to give. For Valuing, it was implied in one instance that asking too much might motivate the individual not to give. However, asking is a minor element of Valuing. Two other Valuing elements, arguably to be at least equal in significance, include showing the value of past giving and intentionally and personally engaging one's interest in the institution's mission.

One example of Stewarding that motivated someone not to give related to the institution not handling its resources well, which also links to Believing, the sense that the institution is "something good." But in several examples, if the institution failed to advance the values a donor has supported, the donor would be inclined to no longer give. These values are at the heart of Believing. This means that an institution must remain "something in which people are capable of believing" in order to receive a major gift.

The literature contributes to this notion of Believing's importance. Brooks' (2005) survey of alumnae and non-alumnae who have given to CCCU institutions finds that trust in leadership to be most important. This notion of trust, the sense leadership will carry out the mission of the institution, aligns with Schervish's (1997) Frameworks of Consciousness, which serves a purpose higher than utility and reward in giving; it functions at the level of self-identity. While utility and reward serve the motives of the mind, self-identity begins to probe the motivations of the heart and soul. Self-identity is

what this study's Believing theme addresses: The motivation that stirs one's core convictions.

Core convictions are what guide the educational programming of the mission-focused college or university. These convictions are present in the institution's mission, but also in its vision and values, too. Every institution of higher learning values what education does to make the world a better place. Moreover, an increasing number of colleges and universities value maximizing higher education's accessibility through greater affordability. A mission that does so for the sake of Christ, according to biblically-informed teaching, is fully compatible with making the world a better place through enlightenment by people for people. The vision of an institution's future begins with how its mission expresses its values today and how its strategic plan will advance those values tomorrow. Ideally, mission, vision, and values are articulated in written statements and conveyed in a way that everyone who is a part of the institution – trustees, administration, faculty, students, staff, alumni, and parents – will subscribe to carry it out in his or her respective role.

When it comes to securing major gifts from alumni donors, mission is the message. This is true for the institutional fund-raising strategy identified in this study, *Relating Vision*. For instance, an appeal for a gift toward a building does in fact help pay for its construction. It is hoped the building will have an architectural aesthetic that represents the institution's educational values in general and those of the program it houses in particular. Beyond its symbolic value, however, the building is a place where research and teaching will foster each student's intellectual, social, emotional, and

spiritual growth, enabling his or her service to church and society. Reaching this higher rung of meaning in the appeal is a necessary component to engaging a donor's core convictions of institutional mission and realizing his or her highest level of support.

### Personalized Appeal Influences

Several respondents were explicit that institutions can in fact build relationships that motivate them to contribute a major gift, the third question of this study. While the absence of Believing may motivate one not to give, it is the presence of Valuing that will motivate one to give at his or her capacity; a message that is personalized is of greatest appeal.

Valuing donors often involves more than the person who asks and the value of the donor's relationship to the institution is expressed differently from individual to individual. Literature supports that trust, sense of impact, and gratitude are all enhanced through personal relationship, which is discussed in this section.

While institutional relations may be represented by an individual, the relationship that motivates an alumnus's major gift transcends that person. A fellow alumnus who is a personal friend may express the impact a donor could make by including a major gift for the institution in his or her stewardship. A former faculty member may share stories of current students that illustrate how the mission the institution served while the donor was a student is still important today.

The motivational label, Valuing, suggests the donor's contribution makes a difference he or she comprehends. Comprehension of the difference one makes, like motivation to give, is complex. One person comprehends this by receiving an expression

of gratitude. Another understands it by explanation of how what he or she gave impacts the institution's mission, vision, and values. Still another knows it by his or her direct involvement in the life of the college or university. To varying degrees, these are understood through direct face-to-face contact; all are only understood, however, through a personalized approach that accounts for that particular person's nuanced motivation to give to his or her alma mater.

Evidence of the value of personal relationship is found in the literature. Chung-Hoon's (2005) research suggests one attribute of enduring donor relationships is personal relationship. Another attribute Chung-Hoon identifies is trust, which is developed and reinforced through personal relationship. Hall (2002) notes that while trust doesn't motivate giving, it is necessary for a major gift to occur. Kelly's (1998) two-way symmetrical model of fund raising is able to account for the donor public's influence on institutional mission both in the aggregate and individual dimensions. The former is realized through research that determines the donor public's collective view that is accounted in both institutional messaging and function. The latter, which contains greater meaning to the individual, is accomplished through the negotiated transformational gift. Just as such a gift doesn't occur without understanding and appealing to the complex motivation of the individual, neither can it occur without knowing the implications such a gift might have on the institution's mission. Both of these understandings, complexity of donor motivation and implications upon mission, only occur through personal relationship.

Growing the heart of a giver, as Jeavons and Basinger (2000) suggest is a primary objective of Christian fund raising, is best nurtured through personal relationship. The integrity with which an evangelical institution accomplishes its mission can provide a sense of confidence for a donor that God is faithful with his or her gift through the organization. However, both a fuller sense of that integrity and the expression of gratitude, another tenet of the Christian faith, are understood through a personal relationship.

#### Some Strategies and Processes Relate to Major Gifts

The first question of this study seeks to understand the strategies and processes evangelical colleges and universities use to encourage major financial donations from their alumni. While each of the strategies and processes employed relate to the general fund-raising practices outlined in literature, only certain ones pertain to encouraging major donors to give.

The strategy of Attracting Givers involves engaging alumni through affinity programs, providing meaningful giving opportunities, and expressing a compelling, mission-oriented message. All of these processes are pertinent to cultivating future major donors, but expressing a mission-oriented message is the only one directly related to encouraging both smaller and major gifts. Rosso and Tempel (2003) note the importance of message in fund raising. Before an appeal for funds will be successful, the organization needs to be clear in the mind of its prospective donors the purpose for its existence and its effective performance of that purpose. The values, mission, and goals of the organization must be present in and presented through the fund-raising function.



“Indeed, fund raising is never an end in itself; it is purposive. It draws both its meaning and essence from the ends that are served: Caring, helping, healing, nurturing, guiding, uplifting, teaching, creating, preventing, advancing a cause, preserving values, and so forth” (2003, p. 16). Expressing the impact of an institution is the foundation of encouraging major gifts.

Relating Vision was identified in this study as a strategy that includes prospect segmentation, special events, and personal contact. While prospect segmentation is important to identifying those whom an institution will cultivate for a major gift, this process does not directly pertain to the encouragement of major gifts. Special events and personal contact, however, are directly relevant to this encouragement of major gifts. Special events can create a social atmosphere that personalize an organization’s mission, and thus appeal to support. Marketing of the event includes “identification of potential attendees, organizational values to be promoted, programs to be supported through the event, communication vehicles, training of key staff and volunteers, public relations to promote the event, and implementation of the marketing plan” (Wendroff, 2003, p. 282).

Personal contact involves intentional prospect engagement. It relates closely to the strategy of Inviting Investment, which is accomplished, in part, through volunteers and involves sensing the motivation of prospects and negotiating and stewarding their gifts. Each of these processes related to Inviting Investment are critical to encouraging major gifts. Hodge (2003) refers to an eight-step direct solicitation process for major gifts, of which cultivation, solicitation and negotiation, acknowledgement, stewardship,

and renewal relate to both the personal contact process and the strategy of Inviting Investment.

The donor's values and desire to leave a legacy must be known. What is important in their life now and what do they eventually wish to be their legacy? Answers to this and the many questions that are rooted to it are typically revealed only through trusted relationships and require permission to enter (Hodge, 2003).

From here, it is a matter of knowing the donor's timing and objective impact upon the fund raiser's organization that enable the success of the invitation to participate. Acknowledging that participation and demonstrating its impact not only affect the fund raiser's integrity, but also the likelihood of another gift of significance (Hodge, 2003).

If the organization's mission and values have been effectively vested in the prospect, transition to the stage of a major-gift proposal is relatively seamless. Keys to successful proposal consideration include ensuring all decision makers for the proposal are "at the table" for discussion (Hodge, 2003, p. 99). Furthermore, the proposal must clearly specify the amount of the requested gift, how the gift will be recognized, and a plan for reporting the impact of the gift after it has been made (p. 99).

#### Shaping Mission and Hearts is an Art

Accommodating donor wisdom in shaping the expression of an institution's mission requires skill of negotiation that creates a gift agreement that neither undermines the call of the institution or the donor. An attribute of grace is needed to help ensure the Christian donor finds the grace of God through his or her contribution, not simply a sense of the institution's value for the gift.

Inviting Investment functions according to the intent of Kelly's (1998) two-way symmetrical model of fund raising through the process of negotiation. This is considered the most ethical model of fund-raising practice because it depends on donor agreement. The key to the effective practice of this model is reaching agreement by which neither an institution nor donor's values and mission are undermined. Pressure for presidents and their gift officers to secure major and transformational gifts can be manipulated by wealthy individuals desiring to impact personal ego more than shape strategic mission. But an institution may also pressure a donor's commitment to a gift he or she is not called to make simply by leveraging his or her sense of Belonging.

According to Hodge (2003), Garber notes that development officers of an organization are "agents of change," responsible for articulating an organization's mission and relating it to the philanthropic values of a prospective major-gift donor. They are to develop an "ownership position" (p. 92) within major-gift prospects. This ownership position is related to the change development officers are seeking to bring. But the change is intended to be limited to the context of mission.

Creating this ownership position in the context of evangelical Christianity requires skill. From their research, Jeavons and Basinger (2000) identified four failures of integrity within Christian organizations. One is the lack of "honesty and full disclosure in communications with donors" (p. 24). Another is the "[failure] to give full respect to the dignity, autonomy, and vision individual donors (usually attempting to maneuver donors into making a gift that does not express their individual values, passions, or priorities)" (p. 24). A third is the "[failure] to treat all donors (and potential

donors) as being of equal worth in the eyes of God” (p. 24). And the last is the “[failure] to make clear connections between requests for support for work that is motivated and shaped by commitments, values, and ideals of faith and the faith held by the donors so that the act of giving can be felt as an expression of faith” (p. 24). These failures violate the intent of Kelly’s two-way symmetrical fund-raising model.

Conversely, Jeavons and Basinger (2000) identify six characteristics of fund raising as ministry. One is a confidence in God’s abundance, expressed through appeals that emphasize more the value of an organization’s mission than the crisis it might serve (2000). A holistic perspective on God’s work, meaning that no single organization serves as the hands and feet of Christ, is a second characteristic (2000). A third characteristic is an understanding of the theology that drives the organization. Lutheran gratitude, Calvinist stewardship, Wesleyan responsiveness, and Roman Catholicism social responsibility should be understood and evident in a respective organization’s fund-raising culture for it to fully bear the fruit of its tradition with integrity. Engaging more than dollars, a fourth characteristic brings a moral responsibility to donor relations that complements its practical utility (2000). A fund development plan that is clearly integrated into an organization’s strategic plan is a fifth characteristic that demonstrates both donor accountability and stewardship of mission (2000).

A final characteristic necessary to the preceding ones being realized is securing spiritually mature and reflective leadership (2000). These are chief development officers whose “faith is at the very core of their professional identities, illuminating and guiding every program choice and every interaction with donors” (p. 157).

There is an even greater risk of harm to a Christian individual in a negotiation. When a very wealthy donor maintains a position of strength in a gift negotiation process, the harm comes in the form of the donor actually receiving what he or she demands. Even if a gift fulfills the strategic purpose of the institution, a Christian donor's ego could be further insulated from a relationship with God through the process of his or her gift.

Moving from egocentric giving to mission-centric giving is aided by a biblical view of both making the gift by the donor and receiving the gift by the fund raiser. Jeavons and Basinger (2000) describe how the Old Testament teaches the purpose of the tithe. The tithe was not intended to be legalistic, but rather an expression of loving obedience to the One who promises to "throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it" (Malachi 3:10). For those uncertain the intent God had for the tithe, Jesus makes it clear by expressing the intent of Mosaic Law: Love first the Lord your God, then your neighbor like yourself (Matthew 22:37-39).

This love is expressed in several forms by New Testament Christians who depended upon charitable support not to pay mortgages, but simply to enjoy a cup of water, piece of bread, and shelter to sleep. "Willingness to live and work under such conditions was viewed as a vital testimony to one's faith" (Jeavons & Basinger, 2000, p. 49). Having known both plenty and want (Philippians 4:12), the Apostle Paul having reached a level of contentedness in Christ leveraged his deep understanding for godly giving, and that already done by Macedonian Christians for the church in Jerusalem, in an appeal to the Corinthians. He tells how the Macedonians "urgently pleaded with us for

the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints” from their “overflowing joy and extreme poverty,” and in turn, “beyond their own ability” (2 Corinthians 8:2-4), which expresses an excellence in the “grace of giving” (8:7). These activities by early Christians both giving and being sustained by charity exhibit sacrifice, grace, and a sense that spiritual benefits already precede the benevolence not guaranteed to them.

This study has determined that motivation to give is complex. It involves Belonging, Stewarding, Believing, and Valuing. All these factors are important, but what they exactly mean and to which degree any one has influence varies from individual to individual. However, one’s belief in mission, vision, and values is a foundational factor to major giving. So is personalized appeal. Relating Vision and Inviting Investment are two strategies that directly contribute to the effective formation of this appeal and ensure the likelihood of a corresponding gift.

#### Recommendations for Practice

Three recommendations for fund raising practice include confirming mission, leveraging mission, and reinforcing alumni investment. All three relate to one another and the conclusions of this study and are considered the study’s most strategic outcomes.

#### Confirm Mission

An institution’s programming, including its alumni relations and fund raising efforts, needs to flow from and be oriented to its mission. Understanding this from alumni and other external groups and from faculty, staff, students, and trustees brings a true picture of people’s perception of mission. Such understanding allows

knowledgeable relational activities by the institution and can play a role in shaping mission and vision.

Programming to people begins with an understanding of what people want. In this context, people are largely alumni. What they want is to belong to an institution in whose mission they believe, to which they are called to help steward, and of which their support is valued. This is true for alumni and donors who financially support the institution and its mission. It is also true for hopefully all who serve at the institution, from the board member to the entry-level staff member. What does this look like for an evangelical college or university? It begins with addressing research questions that generate fuller understanding.

How do an institution's alumni perceive their alma mater's mission? What about its trustees, administrators, faculty, students, and staff, as well as other external groups like current and former parents, prospective students, and financial supporters? Is there a clustering of core convictions about institutional mission and corresponding perceptions of the integrity in which the mission is expressed among specific constituent, demographic, and psychographic groups? How have these convictions and perceptions been shaped? How have they changed over time? What are the qualitative markers and quantitative metrics that define these convictions and perceptions and explain their respective trends? Which convictions does the institution's leadership believe represent its mission? Do they believe change in expression of mission in terms of programming and identity strategically aligns mission with these convictions? If so, what is their plan for change?

Gaining holistic resolution of this perception is initially a time and cost-intensive venture of iteratively systematic survey, focus group, and individual interviews of key stakeholders. Gaining this resolution involves analysis, theorizing, and labeling of data clusters by methodological experts. It also involves understanding the findings' implication upon educational and auxiliary programming, human capital and student recruitment and retention, and external constituent relations and fund-raising practice by faculty, staff, and administrators, as well as institutional policy and procedures by trustees.

What are the benefits that justify the costs of this process? Procured and evaluated well, these convictions and perceptions of the institution's various constituencies are firmly understood, at least by the institution's leadership. Such information guides leadership's mission-based branding of institutional identity among its various constituencies. Branded messaging that resonates with target audiences will persuade prospective students to come study, faculty to come teach, and alumni to associate and give. It may also lead to changes in educational programming that will enable the realization of the institution's mission through its educational output. With measures and systems for collecting and analyzing data and implementing findings in place, additional research will be marginal in cost and may produce longitudinal data that are exponential in value. Stopping here constitutes Kelly's (1998) two-way asymmetrical model of fund raising, where information is gathered, but simply to increase appeal.

Kelly (1998) argues, instead, that the two-way symmetrical model, which entertains external views to shape an institution's mission and identity, is most ethical.



What are the additional costs and benefits of taking this step toward a shared construction of the expression of mission? One cost is the risk of institutional leadership abdicating its responsibility to steward the institution's mission. This indeed occurs when leadership fails to account for all of its constituent groups' perspectives. Hearing them and applying their aggregated wisdom compels more of them to be a part of the institution as students, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, and donors in greater ways. Another cost is leadership making wholesale changes to the expression of mission that ignore and undermine historic strengths unpopular today. Are Aristotle's philosophy, Shakespeare's comedies, and St. Paul's theology less important to educating a student who is more interested in learning the principles of finance and accounting to get his or her first job? Can the understandable pressures by parents and alumni needing a job somehow be mitigated by career internships, mentoring, and minimal vocational classes rather than by eliminating the literature, philosophy, and theology departments, whose courses help a student realize a deeper meaning to his or her life, at least after he or she starts a major-specific career?

The predominant benefit of the two-way symmetrical model is that it builds trust. Listening is a necessary skill in fund raising, sales, and any other task that requires negotiating agreement. In fund raising, it engages the donor because as his or her thoughts are heard, he or she is more likely to trust that his or her ideas are accounted in a proposition. An individual is more inclined to hear an appeal for being a student or supporting a student when he or she is first heard. Even if an individual's thoughts or concerns are refuted, his or her ideas being accounted increase the likelihood he or she will respond positively to an appeal. As it is established, trust becomes arguably the most

powerful part of an institution's identity and mission. The mission becomes authenticated in the minds and hearts of the institution's core constituencies. Such authenticity is scarce and craved today, which causes those who experience the institution's mission to evangelize it to those who might become a part.

### Leverage Mission

Once mission is known, the vision for advancing it involves internal stakeholders, such as faculty, staff, and students, and external stakeholders, such as alumni and donors. Rules that govern its advancement must also be stipulated to keep mission from being changed to something any one stakeholder group might regret.

With an understanding of how mission is expressed today, what is the vision for how it might be expressed tomorrow? For instance, it may be determined that mission is to be stated today as deepening students' understanding of God and his creation through liberal residential education so each may be prepared to receive his or her calling to serve a global church and society. One vision might be to globalize curriculum and expand cross-cultural study and research opportunities to enlarge this understanding of God and his creation. A comprehensive audit of mission, conducted through survey and focus groups, enables the institution to know which respondents correspondingly identify with the institution's mission and, thus, might share a similar vision.

The concepts of mission and vision that emerge from a study then need to be evaluated by the various stakeholder groups within the institution responsible for its implementation. The chief stewards of mission, the trustees, administration, and faculty, need to evaluate the implications and viability of changes to the expression of mission.

Faculty, staff, and students, those affected by changes of mission that impact programming, need to determine how change would be implemented. What plans do faculty committees responsible for curriculum, off-campus programs, and research have to fulfill this vision? How do they see this vision impacting students' understanding of God and how they might be prepared for service? Those responsible for budget, finance, and fund raising need to determine how unfunded elements of change to mission will be generated, either through tuition and fees, debt financing, or fund raising.

Those with networks and money who share this vision are the first to receive these plans because they are the first to help them receive resources to become reality. Networks include others with money, but they can also be others who might serve, such as someone to hold a position in directing the globalization effort. Those with money are the limited few who are able to provide the critical mass of funding that enables a new faculty position, program, or scholarship aid that provides initial lift to the vision. Such gifts may require unorthodox interests of the donor to be honored. The donor may wish for a sibling to be hired for a faculty position. If the sibling is considered most qualified for the position through a competitive candidate review by a disinterested committee, such a hire may be considered acceptable.

Circumventing the danger of possible conflicts of interest or undermining of mission is accomplished in several ways. First, formal approval ought to be granted by the institution's governing board for gift agreements that deviate from the institution's strategic plan. Second, the strategy of Relating Vision should be balanced with Inviting Investment. This involves hiring development staff who will champion the institution's

mission, sense whether donors are also committed to that mission, exhaust charitable investment opportunities that directly align with the institution's strategic plan, and reinforce the importance and value of maintaining institutional mission throughout the negotiation for a gift that deviates from the strategic plan.

### Reinforce Alumni Investment

Better than anyone, alumni understand the importance of an institution's mission. No other stakeholder group is able to better appreciate the institution's mission and see themselves as a part of that mission's accomplishment than alumni.

Core convictions of mission that are observed in the term Believing are considered an important factor in securing a major gift. Likewise, Belonging, being a part of something as an alumnus, is important to giving in the first place. An explanation for this is the perception held by many that higher education doesn't really have a need. With 10% of its operating costs covered by donations and its students representing a relatively elite part of society, one's charitable dollar arguably goes further when given to an organization whose budget depends 90%-100% on charitable donations and its target service group is in far greater need. The pathetic appeal, and often times logical, is much higher for the starving African child than the middle-class American student.

Then why might the alumnus invest when others will not? Because the alumnus, who was the middle-class American student, took an international development class and understands that resolving the social, political, and economic issues that cause that African child to starve today need to be addressed so one day he will starve no more. Through this alumnus's financial support, three students enjoy a more affordable

experience of the same class the alumnus took many years earlier. One will provide clean water to grow crops so that child can eat tomorrow. Another will educate that child, providing her skills to help change her social, political, and economic environment and hope that her children will live under improved conditions. Still another will advocate for foreign aid, diplomacy, and investment and will financially support the work done by the hydrologist and teacher. The alumnus more fully understands the antecedents to the starving child, and, because of the compassion by her exposure, she sacrifices herself both to feed the child today and to ensure her children are cared for tomorrow.

Having experienced the education and its impact, the alumnus understands the nuances of her alma mater's mission to the degree that attract her support more than those who do not benefit from the institution's education and do not see its distinction. For this reason, the reinforcement of mission in the hearts and minds of alumni logically provides the best return on investment of institutional relations.

#### Research Recommendations

Additional research conducted on the margins of this study will further enlighten motivation for giving within an evangelical context. Recommendations for research include observing giving relationships over time, inquiring of student activities that provide a sense of generosity, and witnessing trends in giving between generations.

This study is static in its observation of relational impact within evangelical colleges and universities. How relationships with alumni of rated capacity are both pursued by the institution and generally evolve over time would be interesting to witness.

Also, for alumni who give a major gift during the course of the study, knowing how they perceive the influence of the institution, both culturally and through personal relations, on their motivation to give could illuminate the differences of impact between Believing, which relates to mission, and Valuing, which relates to personal connection.

The purpose of this longitudinal study would be to observe the dynamics of the Belonging, Stewarding, Believing, and Valuing themes in the course of an institution's relational efforts with an alumnus and his or her subsequent consideration and completion of a major gift to the institution. What is the influence of the four themes during the relational process? Does one theme have predominant influence during the early, middle, and final stages of a gift, as well as after the gift has been complete and its purpose implemented? This study could be conducted by observing multiple prospective alumni donor cases within a single institution during periodic intervals over the span of time necessary for several gifts to come to completion and to be implemented. It would utilize an open-ended interview protocol to provide descriptive data that provide understanding of the influence each theme has at various stages of the donor development process.

Another recommended study would probe the college's role in cultivating students' generous spirit through its educational programming. A generous spirit is cultivated over time. Which curricular and co-curricular college experiences contribute to one's sense of generosity? How did those experiences form a sense of generosity? How have those respective forms of generosity been exhibited? Samples of alumni from different generations could be surveyed to identify which college experiences were most meaningful to their development of generosity and how they express that generosity

today. Individuals who fit a modal profile could be interviewed for a more descriptive understanding of a college's contribution to one's sense of generosity.

Still another study would identify trends between generations in giving motivation, direction of gifts, and perceptions of institutional influence. What mix of motivational themes typifies the major gifts of alumni donors from different generations? To which purposes do different generations direct their gifts? How does each generation perceive the institution's capacity to influence their giving and its direction? This study could utilize survey methods on samples of alumni major-gift donors from multiple generations.

#### Remaining Faithful

Colleges and universities purporting to express the evangelical faith of Jesus Christ in and by their educational practice confront challenges today. One challenge is being true to their call. In one sense, every evangelical institution is called to be the same thing, without distinction: Faithful and obedient to the lordship of Christ, whose "kingdom come" and "will be done" (Matthew 6:10) is of utmost interest. Of all their accomplishments, is there evidence of this faithfulness and obedience in students and alumni, not to mention faculty and staff? "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith that can move mountains, but not love, I am nothing" (1 Corinthians 13:2).

In another sense, evangelical institutions are called to differentiate. Matthew's final recorded words of the resurrected Jesus are to "go and make disciples of all nations" (28:19). Different spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12) and contexts of the church

(Revelation 1) suggest there are multiple methods to accomplish this purpose. “Making disciples” in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century global society, the task of evangelical institutions, is at least as complex as understanding the motivation of its alumni to give toward that task.

Therefore, evangelical institutions must differentiate to make the many disciples who will serve the multitude of purposes God desires from his people in both church and society today.

“There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men” (1 Corinthians 12:6). Is the work of one evangelical institution more valued than that of another in the eyes of God? Only as it relates to the fulfillment of the specific task it has been given. This principle is addressed in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25), where one’s relative return of investment is emphasized over his or her absolute return. An institution’s task is construed by its historical, social, cultural, and theological context. Does the institution have a full and complete understanding of its mission? Is there a method by which the institution will adapt the mission’s expression to the context in which it finds itself? How will internal and external wisdom and resources influence these adaptations? An institution, evangelical or otherwise, needs to follow its answers to each question to pursue not only its survival, but also the stewardship of mission that ensures it will.

The people responsible for securing major gifts are mandated to represent the faithfulness and obedience their evangelical institutions seek. They are to differentiate their organization’s work from another that serves an evangelical purpose. But they do so to encourage, not compete. For fund raising, the competition for the institution is the



institution itself. Does it fulfill both the distinct mission to which it has been called within the church of Christ and to the corporate purpose it serves with every other individual and organizational member of the Church?

These fund raisers invite those with whom they relate to invest. They do so by expressing an understanding of how their institution believes its mission can be most strategically advanced. But they do so with sensitivity to the person asked. Perhaps that individual's money is not the only transformational resource they require. Perhaps, as a genuine steward of the institution's purpose, it is his or her wisdom, too. These fund raisers also invite investment by acknowledging a donor's worthy commitment to the other dimensions of Christ's work here on earth. When they do, a broader sense of Belonging, Stewarding, Believing, and Valuing is realized for both giver and receiver and God is glorified.

APPENDIX A  
LETTER OF INSTITUTIONAL INVITATION

[DATE]

[NAME]  
[STREET ADDRESS]  
[CITY], [STATE] [ZIP]

Dear [SALUTATION]:

My name is Brian Gardner, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education program at Loyola University Chicago. I am also the director of development at Wheaton College in Illinois. It is an honor to formally invite your institution's participation in a research project I am conducting.

This study generally explores the motivation of alumni to give. In particular, it looks at various ways in which evangelical Christian colleges and universities engage their alumni for major gifts and how that relationship affects the donors' motivation to give such gifts. Enclosed is a synopsis of the research, which includes an overview of both the process and any associated risks to participants.

Loyola University Chicago's institutional review board (IRB) requires a signed letter of cooperation by an appropriate official before approval of my study at your institution will be granted. I have included a sample letter of cooperation for your review.

I will contact you in the coming weeks to discuss your institution's participation in my study. Thank you for your kind consideration of my proposal.

Grace and peace,

Brian J. Gardner  
Ph.D. Candidate, Higher Education Program  
Loyola University Chicago

BJG  
Enclosures

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

[DATE]

Mr. Brian J. Gardner  
1319 Webster Avenue  
Wheaton, IL 60187

Project Title: Examining the Role of Institutional Relations with Alumni Who Are  
Major Donors to Evangelical Higher Education

Protocol #: 74060 (Loyola University Chicago)

Researcher: Brian Gardner

Dear Brian:

You have proposed a study for which you will serve as investigator. You have shared a copy of your application to Loyola University Chicago's institutional review board (IRB). The procedures of your research protocol are clearly understood, particularly related to recruitment, consent, and data collection. The following items are to be explicitly noted:

1. The chief development officer of our institution will coordinate recruitment of your study's participants at our institution. He or she will also select an institutional liaison to identify 18 possible alumni participants and forward them information about your study.
2. Any archival data and documents about human subjects you are given to review will exclude any information that identifies an individual, a task that will be fulfilled by the chief development officer or whomever he or she assigns.

With the preceding aspects of your particular protocol in mind, I grant you approval to conduct your study at our institution.

Sincerely,

[NAME OF INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVE]  
[TITLE OF INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVE]

APPENDIX C  
SYNOPSIS OF RESEARCH

## SYNOPSIS OF RESEARCH

### Examining the Role of Institutional Relations with Alumni Who Are Major Donors to Evangelical Higher Education

Brian Gardner  
Doctoral Candidate, Loyola University Chicago  
[brian@gardnercommunication.net](mailto:brian@gardnercommunication.net)  
630-220-0975

#### Who am I?

My name is Brian Gardner. I am a doctor of philosophy candidate in the Higher Education program at Loyola University Chicago. I am also director of development at Wheaton College in Illinois.

#### What is the purpose of this study?

This study generally explores the motivation of alumni to give. In particular, it looks at various ways in which evangelical Christian colleges and universities engage their alumni for larger gifts and how that relationship affects donors' motivation to make such gifts.

#### How will this study be conducted?

Case studies of three colleges and universities from the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) will be conducted. Data will be collected from interviews with key individuals responsible for donor relations at each institution and alumni who are donors to the respective school. The chief development officer will present a synopsis of this study to the president and a gift officer, if applicable, and invite their participation. A liaison at each institution, appointed by the chief development officer, will select alumni donors unknown to the researcher and according to specific criteria. This liaison will notify selected alumni donors of this study and encourage contact with the researcher as each desire to participate. Printed and electronic materials utilized by the institution during the current academic year to relate to alumni donors who have made larger gifts will be analyzed.

#### How will this study's results be handled?

Measures will be taken to minimize the possibility of a breach of confidentiality. Data collected will be analyzed and reported only for the purpose of this study. It will be kept safely secured in a locked file cabinet and then destroyed two years after the study is completed. No names of participants or institutions will be released. All individuals and institutions will be referred to by pseudonym. The status of major donor alumni as either participants or non-participants in the study will not be revealed to anyone at any

institution by the researcher. Permission to audio record interviews for later transcription will be sought at the time of each interview. All transcribers will sign confidentiality agreements before services are rendered. A summary of results of the study will be available upon request.

What are the possible risks to participants?

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

What are the possible benefits to participants?

Participants will contribute to a greater understanding of the effective practice of major-gift fund development in evangelical Christian colleges and universities. Fund development involves a tangible exchange of property on the part of the donor for an intangible value the gift recipient generally provides in return. Participants will contribute to a better understanding of what this “intangible value” is and how it may be provided.

What is requested of participants?

Participants are asked to be interviewed at times and locations that are convenient for them. A one-to-two hour audio recorded interview will be conducted to gather participants’ perceptions and experiences related to financial giving. Representatives from colleges and universities will be asked to share activities they perform to encourage larger gifts and how they perceive those activities to be strategic. Alumni who are donors will be asked what factors influenced their decision to make a large contribution to the college or university from which they graduated. Furthermore, alumni will be asked how they perceive activities of the college or university from which they graduated and how these activities influence their motivation to give.



APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL STAFF MEMBER'S CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

## INSTITUTIONAL STAFF MEMBER'S CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Examining the Role of Institutional Relations with Alumni Who Are Major Donors to Evangelical Higher Education

Researcher: Brian Gardner, Ph.D. Candidate

Faculty Sponsor: Terry E. Williams, Ph.D.

### Introduction

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Brian Gardner for a dissertation under the supervision of Terry E. Williams, Ph.D., in the Program of Higher Education at Loyola University Chicago. You are being asked to participate because at least part of your job involves relating to alumni for the purpose of securing a major gift at a Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) institution.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in this study.

### Purpose

This study generally explores the motivation of alumni to give. In particular, it looks at various ways in which colleges and universities engage their alumni for larger gifts and how that relationship affects donors' motivation to give such gifts.

Case studies of three colleges and universities from the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) will be conducted. At each institution, data will be collected from interviews with individuals responsible for charitable fund raising and alumni who have given larger gifts to the institution. Printed and electronic materials used by the institution with such donors during the past year will be reviewed.

### Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview. Interviews will be held at times and locations that are convenient for you. A one-to-two-hour, audio recorded interview will be conducted to gather your perceptions and experiences related to financial giving. You will also be asked to share activities you and your institution perform to encourage major gifts and how you perceive these activities to be strategic.

You will be contacted after the interview to clarify and verify statements that you made during the interview. Your identity, the identity of your institution, and the identities of others you might mention in the interview will not be revealed.

### Risks/Benefits

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Possible benefits to participants include their understanding that they will contribute to a greater understanding of the effective practice of major-gift fund development in evangelical Christian colleges and universities. Upon request, the findings of this study will be provided to all participants who will benefit from learning about the effective practice of major-gift fund development in evangelical Christian colleges and universities.

### Confidentiality

The names of all participants, institutions, and programs will not be released or known to anyone other than the researcher, Brian Gardner. All consent forms, transcribed interviews, interview notes, and audio recordings that might identify an interview participant will be kept safely secured in locked files and then destroyed two years after the study is completed. Consent forms will include a pseudonym by which each person interviewed will be referred in the transcribed interviews, interview notes, and audio recordings by which interview data are collected. These consent forms will be stored separately from the transcribed interviews, interview notes, and audio recordings. The individual transcribing interview data from audio recordings has already signed a confidentiality agreement.

### Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in the study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

### Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions about this research project or interview, feel free to contact Brian Gardner at (630) 220-0975 or [brian@gardnercommunication.net](mailto:brian@gardnercommunication.net). You may also contact Mr. Gardner's faculty sponsor, Dr. Terry Williams, at (312) 915-7002 or [twillia@luc.edu](mailto:twillia@luc.edu).

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Compliance Manager in Loyola University Chicago's Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Audio Recording Refusal

As a participant in this study, you may refuse to allow your interview to be audio recorded. If this is your preference, it will be acknowledged by both your and the researcher's initials below.

Participant's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study at this time. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX E

INSTITUTIONAL STAFF MEMBER'S INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## INSTITUTIONAL STAFF MEMBER'S INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Based on your own experience in fund raising, what do you believe most motivates alumni to contribute at any level to their alma mater?
2. What motivational factors, if any, may distinguish the receipt of a major gift from an alumnus from a smaller financial gift?
3. To what extent and in what ways do you believe a college can 'motivate' a donor to contribute a major gift to the institution?
4. Please describe the various programs and activities followed by your institution in identifying and securing major gifts from alumni.
5. Please describe those institutional activities and programs that you feel are the most effective in influencing an alumnus to become a major gift donor.
6. What practices in your view are least effective in gaining major gifts from alumni?
7. To what extent might specific institutional programs and activities designed to identify major gifts be linked to broader strategic thinking at the institution? Can you provide an illustration of this?
8. What strategies, programs, or activities to secure major gifts from alumni would you recommend that the institution adopt that may be new or different from what you are doing now?
9. How would you describe the nature of the relationship between your institution and your alumni major donor prospects? What would you like the relationship between your institution and your alumni major donor prospects to be?

APPENDIX F  
LETTER OF DONOR INVITATION

[DATE]

[NAME]  
[STREET ADDRESS]  
[CITY], [STATE] [ZIP]

Dear [SALUTATION]:

Brian Gardner, a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education program at Loyola University Chicago, is conducting a study that generally explores the motivation of alumni to give. In particular, the study looks at various ways in which evangelical Christian colleges and universities engage their alumni for larger gifts and how that relationship affects donors' motivation to give such gifts. Enclosed is a synopsis of the research, which includes an overview of both the process and any associated risks to participants.

You are part of a sample of our alumni who are invited to participate in this study. To protect your confidentiality, your name has not been shared with Mr. Gardner. Furthermore, your involvement in this study will not be known to us if you elect to do so. To participate, please contact Mr. Gardner at [brian@gardnercommunication.net](mailto:brian@gardnercommunication.net) or (630) 220-0975.

On behalf of Mr. Gardner, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[NAME OF INSTITUTIONAL LIAISON]  
[TITLE OF INSTITUTIONAL LIAISON]  
[NAME OF INSTITUTION]

Enclosure



APPENDIX G

ALUMNI DONOR'S CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

## ALUMNI DONOR'S CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Examining the Role of Institutional Relations with Alumni Who Are Major Donors to Evangelical Higher Education

Researcher: Brian Gardner, Ph.D. Candidate

Faculty Sponsor: Terry E. Williams, Ph.D.

### Introduction

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Brian Gardner for a dissertation under the supervision of Terry E. Williams, Ph.D., in the Program of Higher Education at Loyola University Chicago. You are being asked to participate because you are an alumnus or alumna of a Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) member institution.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in this study.

### Purpose

This study generally explores the motivation of alumni to give. In particular, it looks at various ways in which colleges and universities engage their alumni for larger gifts and how that relationship affects donors' motivation to give such gifts.

Case studies of three colleges and universities from the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) will be conducted. At each institution, data will be collected from interviews with individuals responsible for charitable fund raising and alumni who have given larger gifts to the institution. Printed and electronic materials used by the institution with such donors during the past year will be reviewed.

### Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview. Interviews will be held at times and locations that are convenient for you. A one-to-two-hour, audio recorded interview will be conducted to gather your perceptions and experiences related to financial giving. You will also be asked what factors might influence your decision to make a major contribution to the college or university from which you graduated. Furthermore, you will be asked how you perceive the activities of the college or university from which you graduated and how these activities influence your motivation to give.

You will be contacted after the interview to clarify and verify statements that you made during the interview. Your identity, the identity of your institution, and the identities of others you might mention in the interview will not be revealed.

### Risks/Benefits

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Possible benefits to participants include their understanding that they will contribute to a greater understanding of the effective practice of major-gift fund development in evangelical Christian colleges and universities. Upon request, the findings of this study will be provided to all participants who will benefit from learning about the effective practice of major-gift fund development in evangelical Christian colleges and universities.

### Confidentiality

The names of all participants, institutions, and programs will not be released or known to anyone other than the researcher, Brian Gardner. All consent forms, transcribed interviews, interview notes, and audio recordings that might identify an interview participant will be kept safely secured in locked files and then destroyed two years after the study is completed. Consent forms will include a pseudonym by which each person interviewed will be referred in the transcribed interviews, interview notes, and audio recordings by which interview data are collected. These consent forms will be stored separately from the transcribed interviews, interview notes, and audio recordings. The individual transcribing interview data from audio recordings has already signed a confidentiality agreement.

### Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in the study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any questions or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

### Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions about this research project or interview, feel free to contact Brian Gardner at (630) 220-0975 or [brian@gardnercommunication.net](mailto:brian@gardnercommunication.net). You may also contact Mr. Gardner's faculty sponsor, Dr. Terry Williams, at (312) 915-7002 or [twillia@luc.edu](mailto:twillia@luc.edu).

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Compliance Manager in Loyola University Chicago's Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Audio Recording Refusal

As a participant in this study, you may refuse to allow your interview to be audio recorded. If this is your preference, it will be acknowledged by both your and the researcher's initials below.

Participant's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study at this time. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX H  
LETTER OF ALUMNI DONOR REFUSAL

[DATE]

[NAME]  
[STREET ADDRESS]  
[CITY], [STATE] [ZIP]

Dear [SALUTATION]:

Thank you for your interest in my study that explores the motivation of alumni to give. I provided [NAME OF INSTITUTION] criteria by which they selected alumni to invite their participation in this study. One criterion was the total number of alumni to invite so I might have enough respondent interviews. As it turns out, I underestimated the willingness of people to participate from [NAME OF INSTITUTION] and have already filled my quota.

While I will be unable to interview you for my study, please know that your willingness to participate is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Grace and peace,

Brian J. Gardner  
Ph.D. Candidate, Higher Education Program  
Loyola University Chicago

BJG

APPENDIX I  
ALUMNI DONOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## ALUMNI DONOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. At what point in your life did you begin to contribute either your time, your personal funds, or other valuable resources to any charitable educational, religious, or other organization and what do you recall motivated you at that time to give?
2. To what types of charitable organizations have you chosen to contribute over your life? Why have these organizations been important to you?
3. Over time, have the factors influencing your decision to contribute to various charitable organizations changed? Why or why not?
4. At what point in time did you first consider making a contribution (at any level) to your alma mater? What do you recall may have influenced your desire to consider giving?
5. When you were either an undergraduate or graduate student, did you believe then that you would someday become a contributor to the institution? Why or why not?
6. In deciding to contribute to your alma mater, were there any specific people, college activities or programs or other experiences that have been particularly influential in motivating you to give? Why or why not?
7. To what extent do you feel that your alma mater could realistically motivate an alumnus to contribute a major gift to the institution?
8. What institutional approaches or activities do you feel have been especially meaningful or effective in assisting you to come to the decision to give to your alma mater?
9. Please describe any approaches or activities that you feel would not be effective in motivating you to give a major gift to your (or any) institution.
10. What strategies or activities would you recommend that your alma mater adopt (or continue to follow) that you believe may be especially effective in reaching out to potential major gift donors among alumni? Why are these strategies important?
11. How would you describe the nature of the relationship between you and your alma mater? What would you like the relationship between you and your alma mater to be?



APPENDIX J  
TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

## TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to transcribe the interviews for the  
(Insert Printed Name)

doctoral research of Brian Gardner entitled “Examining the Role of Institutional Relations with Alumni Who Are Major Donors to Evangelical Higher Education.” I will maintain strict confidentiality of the data files and the transcripts. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- I will not discuss them with anyone but the researcher.
- I will not share copies with anyone except the researcher.
- I agree to turn over all copies of the transcripts to the researcher at conclusion of the contract.
- I will destroy the audio files I receive upon conclusion of the contract.

I have read and understood the information provided above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Transcriber’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher’s Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX K  
PARTICIPANTS AND INSTITUTIONS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Institution</u>	<u>Role</u>
Harold Swanson	Heartland U.	President
Barry Smith	Heartland U.	Chief Development Officer
Bill Mathews	Heartland U.	Alumnus Major Donor
Greg & Carla Oswald	Heartland U.	Alumnus Major Donor
Wayne Williams	Heartland U.	Alumnus Major Donor
John Beamer	Northern Metro U.	President
Brad Anthony	Northern Metro U.	Chief Development Officer
Bruce Miller	Northern Metro U.	Alumnus Major Donor
Taylor & Janice Simpson	Northern Metro U.	Alumnus Major Donor
Vince & Susan Swanberg	Northern Metro U.	Alumnus Major Donor
Burt Bailey	Western Denominational U.	President
Jacob Wilson	Western Denominational U.	Chief Development Officer
Darren King	Western Denominational U.	Alumnus Major Donor
Dean Newman	Western Denominational U.	Alumnus Major Donor
Gerald Sampson	Western Denominational U.	Alumnus Major Donor

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## VITA

Brian Gardner is the product of several Christian colleges and universities. Before attending Loyola University Chicago, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business and Economics from George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon. Brian later earned a Master of Business Administration degree from Seattle Pacific University in Seattle, Washington. Both institutions are members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU).

Shortly after graduation from George Fox, Brian began his career in external relations when he was hired as an admissions representative for George Fox through D.H. Dagley Associates, an admissions consulting firm from Atlanta, Georgia. He identified prospective undergraduate students who aligned with George Fox's academic profile and encouraged their application and matriculation. After his first year, Brian was awarded the company's Associate of the Year, a distinction bestowed upon an admissions representative who exemplifies both recruitment performance and identification with the school he or she represents.

While completing his Master's degree, Brian was an integrated systems specialist in call center operations for AirTouch Cellular, a predecessor of Verizon Wireless. He provided technical support and vendor relations for the center's two predictive dialing systems. He was recognized by his peers as one of AirTouch's Service Legends, an award given to the top 1% of the company's approximately 5,000 employees who demonstrated exceptional service to either internal or external customers.

In 1997, Brian returned to his work in external college relations at Wheaton College (IL) as a regional director of development, pursuing larger outright and planned gifts within the western United States. In 2002, he added regional director training and orientation for the regional director staff to his responsibilities. Since 2007, Brian has served as Wheaton's director of development, leading a staff of 15 people responsible for securing approximately \$10-\$20 million annually for the college. Other activities of his department include the coordination and research of over 1,500 prospective major-gift donors, stewardship of over 700 scholarships valued at nearly \$100 million, and the management of a \$15 million physicians campaign within the science initiative of The Promise of Wheaton, a five-year \$260 million comprehensive funding effort in conjunction with the college's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010.

## DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Brian J. Gardner has been read and approved by the following committee:

Terry E. Williams, Ph.D., Director  
Associate Professor of Educational Leadership  
Loyola University Chicago

Janis Fine, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Educational Leadership  
Loyola University Chicago

Wesley Willmer, Ph.D.  
Senior Vice President  
Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

---

Date

---

Director's Signature