

# Part One

## Development and Academic Leaders

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# The Role of Academic Leaders in Development

Development has become a part of every academic leader's job. Scan the ads in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and you will find that nearly every one for a dean, president, or provost includes a reference to fundraising as part of the position.

Rare is the university that can give its colleges everything they need, or want, in order to be the best they can be. Academics and program heads who passively rely on traditional sources of funding will be left behind by other programs in their own university and by peer colleges in other universities. To excel in garnering new resources, academic leaders must be creative, entrepreneurial, and proactive.

Securing private support is primarily the responsibility of the development office, whether the central campus program or a development staff within your program. Many of the gifts your college receives will result from the direct work of these staff. Academic heads who rely solely on the development staff can count on receiving small current use gifts and the occasional larger outright gift or bequest.

Those who become personally involved in development can expect much more. A donor who is considering making a major investment in your program will almost always want to know you, understand your vision, assess your leadership, and feel confident that you can steward the gift wisely. Development officers can explain your college or program and the work you do. But no one

can say it in quite the same way as you can. It is your field, your leadership, your vision, and your faculty, and donors want to hear all of that personally from you.

Some academics love development and are highly effective at it. It comes naturally to them, and they happily make it a high priority. Others tolerate it, engaging somewhat hesitantly and reluctantly. Still others avoid it at all costs. Not surprisingly, those in the first category are the most successful and raise the most money. Donors can tell when an academic is genuinely enjoying development work, and they respond accordingly.

If you are in the second category, do not despair. Many academics begin their engagement with development expecting not to like it. Over time, many find it to be one of the most enjoyable parts of their job.

The most common concern new academic leaders express about development is that it will be like sales. They imagine they will be trying to extract money from people who do not want to give it up. Nothing could be further from the truth. When donors talk about giving, they usually mention feeling joyful, happy, and fulfilled. As you will see in subsequent chapters, giving comes from a partnership that forms between you and the donor, where you both share the ultimate goal of advancing your program. Once you experience that process, you will begin to see why some academics love it. And in fact, you might become one of those enthusiastic fundraisers.

Academics who love fundraising and excel at it are fondly called *development deans*, *development presidents*, or the equivalent title by their development colleagues. What makes those academics so good at development is not the ability to “sell.” It is the commitment in spirit and in time they make to the work. They are available for development purposes and are genuinely committed to development work. They do not just go through the motions. Development academics have a vision and a plan for their programs and can articulate it in person and in writing. They love

their programs, and their vision for what their programs can become is contagious. They enjoy their internal and external constituencies. This is more than a job for a development academic; it is a passion.

Universities appoint academics to leadership positions based on their academic and administrative achievements and then expect them to be seasoned major gift officers their first day on the job. The majority of academics who are not successful at development simply lack a solid knowledge base for how to be effective in an area that is new to them. This book introduces you to the concepts and practices you need in order to be a successful fundraising leader.

## **Public Universities and Private Philanthropy**

Public universities entered the world of fundraising decades later than private universities. And many academics who are entering the world of development have spent their careers in public universities. Therefore, academics who have advanced their careers in public universities may not have had significant exposure to fundraising programs as they have advanced through the faculty ranks.

Traditionally public universities had a reliable source of income from their state legislatures; private philanthropy was not part of the picture. By the early 1980s, the major public universities began to recognize that basic funding from their states would provide them only with the resources necessary to be good universities. To be great, they needed more, and so they began to pursue private philanthropy for that margin of excellence beyond the baseline state funding and the federal research dollars their faculty were securing. Through the 1990s and the early 2000s, more and more state universities began exploring private philanthropy. As state resources allocated to universities began to decline, the universities' reasons for pursuing private philanthropy expanded from

merely seeking the icing on the cake to realizing they needed private support to provide the basic ingredients for the cake itself.

Public universities newly entering the development world are at a disadvantage for several reasons:

- Their alumni were not trained from their first years in college to think of the university as needing their philanthropic support. Many private colleges and universities start this training from the moment the students are admitted.
- The public, including alumni, often do not realize that the university is no longer fully supported by the state.
- Some state legislatures view funds raised from private sources as a replacement for public allocations.

Academics in these universities can especially benefit from engaging in development. It is a buffer against growing budget cuts as state support declines.

## Development Versus Advancement

As you enter the world of fundraising, you will commonly hear the terms *development* and *advancement*. They are frequently used interchangeably, but are fundamentally different.

*Development* refers to fundraising and all the steps involved in the process of raising money.

*Advancement* is a broader term that encompasses all of the functions related to advancing the cause of a program or university externally. The traditional advancement model is a partnership among development, alumni relations, and communications. Many programs now expand on that model to include admissions, government relations, community relations, public relations, and other functions responsible for relationships with external constituencies.

This book is primarily a guide for your work in development, though I occasionally expand the focus to encompass other areas of advancement.

## **An Academic's Role**

Your development staff, explored in depth in the next chapter, will do the vast majority of the work of the development program. Given the many demands on your time, you should use what time you have available for strategic development, engaging in activities that only you can do.

Your primary roles in the development process are to inspire potential donors, assist donors in investing in your program, and ensure that donors' gifts are properly managed and implemented. These roles involve a variety of activities, ranging from interacting with high-end prospective donors to lending your voice to the themes and messages of the annual fund. In all of your development work, you are the face of your program, the person to whom donors entrust their contributions.

We begin by looking at your relationship with the development staff.

