



# Ask & Receive

## Raising Funds and Friends for Campus Ministry

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February, 2012

### An Initiative of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team

- ♦ The Episcopal Church
- ♦ The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- ♦ The United Church of Christ
- ♦ The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- ♦ The United Methodist Church
- ♦ The Presbyterian Church (USA)



Affiliated with the Education and Leadership Ministries of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA

To learn more about the Initiative and apply for training or consultation services, go to the ECMT Web site at [www.higheredmin.org](http://www.higheredmin.org)

### ASK: And the Winner Is.....

**T**he Oscar presentations that played to millions this past weekend were typically glamorous, self-congratulating, splashy, boring, long-winded, silly, and fairly predictable. Sort of like your annual fund, right?

If yours is like most organizations, about this time of year, you are sitting in the afterglow of your annual appeal, trying to figure out what went right, what went wrong, and where you could have piled on the pizzazz that would have lit up the screen like no other year before. After all, you worked hard on the appeal this year. You tried to expand your donor base (or your prospect list) to appeal to a wider audience. You pumped more money into looking good; maybe you even went for a four-color newsletter and sent your appeal first-class to your best donors. If you did all that and you saw good returns, congratulations. But if the glamour is fading and this is getting to be really hard work with little recognition, here are a few things you might consider as you plan for next year's annual presentation.

Remember, for starters, that unlike the Oscars, your annual appeal needs to happen more frequently than once a year. It's often called the "sustaining fund," because it keeps you going from month to month and, therefore, the vital ministry you are doing needs to be in front of your donors more than once a year. Good donors want to hear from you often. They want to know how you are thriving and how their gifts are being utilized. Consider being in touch at least four times a year through newsletters, mail, and by phone.

Like celebrities, your donors need special recognition at times. A gift that is clearly a "stretch gift" for them should be followed by an immediate, sincere thank you, preferably by phone or a personal note. Don't ask for another gift until you have thanked them for

the previous gift, and hopefully not at the same time (like putting a new solicitation envelope in with the thank you note). Be classy. You may not be able to send Billy Crystal to the door, but you could thank them in person. What a surprise!

I often circulate an article (*Reinventing Your Annual Fund*) by Karla Williams at the ECMT workshops. Her out-of-the-box thinking challenges us to split our annual efforts into more focused contacts with specific cohorts, creating a program unique to each group within the organization. You might appeal to older alums in one way, parents of students in another, congregations in another, and younger, newer donors in yet another way. Pay attention to the values and interests of each grouping, she urges. Don't try to reach everyone in one general mailing. Give people the opportunity to get involved in different ways.

She writes, "Continuous quality improvement is a must; without it we will succumb to the status quo and become weary and ineffectual. Fortunate is the organization with an entrepreneur in the development department who will take the annual giving program apart and put it back together again, breathing life into it in imaginative ways."

You may not have to spend a lot more money, or even a lot more time, to make your sustaining fund sparkle and dance. Focus, intentionality, and sensitivity to your audience will be key, however. Beyond that, you will need some strong help from your board, from volunteers, and perhaps from an outside professional. No one ever claims to have earned an Oscar all by themselves. They thank all kinds of folks as they clutch their award. May you do so too at the end of a fabulous year!

## TRAINING VISITOR VOLUNTEERS



“When asked by a prospective donor how much he should give, the best reply is: “Give until you’re proud!”  
 Paul Ireland

Those of you who have been around the field of fundraising for a while know that mailings, phonathons, and special events cannot possibly do the heavy lifting for a serious campaign. You need to be present with people in order to invite them into your vital ministry in a personal, genuine way.

You also know that all of these essential visits cannot possibly be made by staff and a couple of key board members. Volunteers will likely need to be recruited. Not just any volunteer, of course. Ideally persons who have made significant gifts themselves to your ministry. Those who have the interpersonal skills and hopefully some experience. And those who have the time and the commitment to give to your ministry.

This requires a training session for all volunteers, including board members and any staff that will be involved. It is essential that all participants come together to hear the story, share a common vision, build on each other’s enthusiasm, and learn how to make visits in the most effective way—even if they may have made similar visits for other organizations. Your campaign is unique. Here are some ideas about how to work with good volunteers so that they can become great visitors.

- ◆ Require all volunteer visitors to attend a three-hour training session. Be sure to thank them often for their willingness to be a part of this exciting venture.
- ◆ Have as much biographical information available on all prospective donors as possible.
- ◆ Role-play a visit, helping the visitor learn good listening and response skills. Provide an outline of key points to be covered. Be sure they have up to date information and copies of brochures or the case statement.

- ◆ Set up two person visitation teams.
- ◆ Assign visitors carefully, giving them the option of exchanging names if they feel uncomfortable with certain prospects. Try to connect the visitor with someone they know or a peer (same business, age group, alumni group, etc.)
- ◆ Assign no more than 5 names per visitor. Eager volunteers may request more later.
- ◆ The campaign chair should be in touch early and often with visitors, checking in to see how things are going and if they need any assistance.
- ◆ Emphasize that asking for a major gift will likely take more than one visit. Encourage them to make their visits early so that they can conduct follow-up visits if necessary.
- ◆ Bring all visitors together at the end of the visiting cycle (no more than one month) so that they can share their successes and tell their stories.
- ◆ Reward their service with public appreciation and, perhaps, a gift or gift certificate.

If they are trained, successful, and thanked, these good folks, who have been generous with their time, will become your most ardent supporters in the days and years to come.

### WORKSHOP APPLICATIONS INVITED

The Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team invites campus ministries across the country to apply to host a workshop on fund/friend raising and board development for both staff and board members. The cost of the training services are shared with the ECMT. In 2012 workshops are scheduled in Chattanooga, TN (March 10) and Billings/Bozeman, MN (April 19-21) and one pending in northern California. For information and applications go to the ECMT website at [higheredmin.org](http://higheredmin.org) or contact the workshop leader, Galen Hora at [ecmtconsultant@hotmail.com](mailto:ecmtconsultant@hotmail.com)

## GIVING TRENDS

**W**e began paying attention to Megatrends decades ago, when we woke up to the reality that change was happening not in slow incremental steps, but in big, bounding leaps.<sup>1</sup> Change was happening so fast that we felt overwhelmed by it, consumed by it, bracing ourselves for the next tsunami-like wave. Our ministries in higher education were impacted by radical shifts in university culture, church life, economic collapse, and ethical malfunctioning at every level. Our ministries on campus today barely resemble those of a generation ago. Hopefully that's true, and it's a good thing.

If we have vital ministries these days, it's because of our nimble ability to foresee change, name it, and adapt to it. We have changed the way we staff our ministries, moving from traveling lay "counselors" and pastors who were like campus circuit riders in the early years, to a more traditional stable of staff who provided congregational-like ministry, centered on worship and pastoral care. Now we are flexing with change by embracing social media, looking at new ecumenical alliances, and raising a rising percentage of our own funding. Campus ministry has needed to be agile in the midst of change. Adaptability partly defines us.

**"Financial vibrancy is the capacity of an organization to make the transition from one sustainable moment to the next." Gayle Gifford**

This poignant quote comes from an article about change in organizations.<sup>2</sup> In the article Gifford affirms the constancy of change and encourages organizations to see this never-ending flux and flow as a way of keeping their mission sharp and their goals focused. Referring to the quote, she says that "its brilliance lies in its ability to succinctly capture the complex and unfolding dynamic that each of our organizations negotiates over its lifetime." She urges us to give ourselves credit for agility and the ability to survive and adapt in a rapidly changing landscape. One would think that she has campus ministry on her radar.

A relatively new publication on Megatrends is authored by Patricia Aburdene.<sup>3</sup> She presents seven major shifts that will impact our culture in the next decade.

1. The Power of Spirituality. Seventy-eight percent look "within" for solutions.
2. The Dawn of Conscious Capitalism. Free enterprise is being re-invented to honor stakeholders and shareholders who make decisions with their pocketbooks.
3. Leading from the Middle. "Middle" managers who exercise values, influence, and moral authority are replacing flashy CEOs in leading organizations forward.
4. Spirituality in Business. Employee-based spiritual networks and faith-speak at work are on the rise.
5. The Values-Driven Consumer. People have reasons/values that inform purchases that must be affirmed.
6. The Wave of Conscious Solutions. Look for problems solved more by meditation or yoga than intellect or hard-nosed bargaining.
7. The Socially Responsible Investment Room. Green portfolios and investments in organizations working on social change will increase rapidly.

The implications for our ministries on campus are many. To name a few, we will want to be highly aware of the socially alert, personally motivated consciences of our donors. They will make decisions from the heart, focusing on those organizations that share their values and moral/spiritual commitments to making social change and affecting lives. They will look for authenticity and integrity. They will want a way to connect beyond their checkbooks. How our organizations identify and embrace change will determine our futures. What can you do today to prepare for the tomorrow that is already here?

<sup>1</sup>An early book on the subject was *Megatrends: The New Directions Transforming our Lives* by John Naisbitt, 1988

<sup>2</sup>*Contributions*, Volume 21, Number 2, 2007

<sup>3</sup>*Megatrends 2010: The Rise of Conscious Capitalism* by Patricia Aburdene, 2007

### ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

Ask & Receive is a newsletter designed to supplement the Fund Raising Initiative of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team. It presents a series of ideas and resources on a monthly basis to address the challenges of fund raising and board development, focused on the particular context of campus ministry. Ask & Receive is published on behalf of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team at 2358 151st Avenue NW, Andover, MN. The editor is Galen Hora. Phone: 763-350-3898. Email: [ecmtconsultant@hotmail.com](mailto:ecmtconsultant@hotmail.com)

## STRATEGIC PLANNING IS BOARD WORK

Here's what I want to say to many organizations when I talk with them about strategic planning. "Hope is not a strategic plan!" They expect to launch themselves from where they are now into a future bright with possibility by gritting their corporate teeth and hanging on or by simply thinking positively about tomorrow. They may tinker with little changes that look good on the surface, but in the long run don't change anything. While hope may be a theological virtue, the reality is that it's the hard work of planning, implementing, and evaluating that breaks through the current malaise into some vibrant, new possibilities for the ministry. This is the primary work of the board or oversight committee for campus ministry.

The word "strategic" comes from the Greek word for a military campaign: *στρατεία* (2 Cor. 10:4; I Tim 1:18) It expresses the need for an overarching vision of what can happen and determines the resources necessary to accomplish purposeful goals. Strategic planning is the process of determining how to get from where you are to where you want to be in as effective, efficient and faithful way as possible. It involves good thinkers and planners on many levels. Good strategic planning can't be done on the quick or by isolated individuals. It's a corporate responsibility, requiring boldness, creativity, critical assessment, and time.

*"Strategic planning is an attempt to let future priorities have an influence on today's activities." Guy Saffold*

Along with strategic planning, strategic thinking takes a high priority on the agenda of boards and those in leadership. In fact, if the thinking doesn't happen, the planning probably won't either. Strategic thinking is that energizing, uplifting activity that happens, often spontaneously, when people who care about an organization begin to dream about what they would like to see happen, without regard for cost, time, or effort. It's hope in hiking boots.

The ultimate goal of both thinking and planning is to stimulate action in the direction of the future, while maintaining faithful to the mission. Often the vision is simple and clear, unencumbered by layers of goals and objectives, at least

at the outset. When leadership is committed to strategic planning, successful change is remarkably close behind. Leaning into tomorrow guides our actions today.

Leadership by the board is key to strategic planning. They have been given corporate responsibility. However, it's often staff who drive the changes in the organization. The board defers to them because they know how things function on a day-to-day basis. They know which programs work, where the budget can be pinched or expanded. They are the voice and face of the ministry in so many ways. Yet, when it comes to long range planning and visioning, it is the board's responsibility first and foremost, although certainly in conversation with staff. Staff may come and go, but the corporate responsibility of the board endures forever (unless it dissolves).

Fisher Howe states, "Because the board is ultimately responsible for the welfare and effectiveness of the whole organization, it is answerable for what the organization does and for how it does it. Accordingly, a board must not only assure that planning takes place and oversee the process, it must actively participate in the process. . . . Strategic planning is quintessentially for the board. Only the board can determine what the organization will be and do in the next five years, only the board can stand by the values and set the course."<sup>1</sup>

Some organizations separate the strategic plan from the operating plan, giving staff the responsibility for setting program goals and objectives. This may work conceptually; however, the board still needs have oversight of the whole operation. The board must own the strategic plan, from the early stages of analysis and reality testing to the final stages of implementation and evaluation. While a consultant may be useful at certain stages, and while the insights and experience of staff may be very valuable, the final process sits in the lap of the board.

<sup>1</sup>*The Board's Responsibility for Strategic Planning*, Fisher Howe, NCNB, pp. 13, 97

"The purpose of planning is not to decide what should be done in the future, but to decide what should be done now to make desired things happen in an uncertain future."

Fisher Howe