



# Ask & Receive

## Raising Funds and Friends for Campus Ministry

*Ask & Receive*

*September, 2011*

### 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: WHY ARE WE DOING THIS ?

**W**e all have said or heard this many times: “Why don’t you stop and think before you do something!” A pause for reflection may keep us out of all kinds of trouble, away from making foolish decisions, or chasing fantasies not based in reality. It’s a good life lesson and it’s a good fundraising lesson as well.

Board members and staff together should ask this question on a regular basis. It will call them wrestle with core values and ways in which these values are being lived out in the mission and programs of the ministry. This question will also come into play at budget-building time as precious resources are being allocated appropriately. It will guide decisions about programs and staffing and volunteer configurations, including board participation.

If this kind of evaluative question is not asked on a regular basis, vision may be skewed by expediency and resources may be wasted on insignificant ends. The leadership of the ministry, including students, must begin to think of themselves as a “community of stewards,” accountable for both securing and utilizing the resources placed before them.

This is not about business practices as much as it is about the care given to the blessings God provides and the calling to use them for the life of the world. A Methodist colleague reminds me that John Wesley instructed his followers to “earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can.” It is the last of the trilogy that tempers the first two. We earn and save so that we can give. Giving is a spiritual discipline. It calls us to stop and think about the “what” of our lives as related to the “why” of our ministries. The “how much” arises in response.

A number of years ago a staff colleague gathered a group of students to consider a new slogan for our campus ministry. They struggled with a number of options until someone, in the desperation of the approaching midnight hour, yelled out, “What in God’s name are we doing here?” That was it! The new slogan appeared on T-shirts, flyers, and even a billboard on the edge of campus.

Campus ministry fundraising centers around this focal concern for clarity of purpose and the integration of all aspects of the ministry that relate to this core vision. The donors who support our work on campus want to know this above all. They want to know how their own values are being lived out in the ministry that they support with their own carefully stewarded resources. They will not waste them on messy decisions or haphazard programs that do not touch lives and change hearts. They want to know that their gifts will make a difference in someone’s life. They want to see how the resources they share with the ministry are being cared for and purposefully directed.

At the end of the day, our donor friends, who have chosen to extend their care of the world through our ministries, want to know that there is a solid, direct linkage between the desires of their hearts and the mission of our organizations, so that they can accomplish things through/with us.

The next time you write an article for your newsletter or send a solicitation letter, consider sharing with your donor friends some of the ways in which their gifts are being used to fulfill the vision you have set before them. Tell them why you are doing what you are doing and invite them to join you.



“Raising money takes dogged persistence, bullheadedness, salesmanship, year-round cultivation, board support and encouragement, a plan, an attainable goal, and lot of excitement.”  
Brian O’Connell

## GET SERIOUS, STAY ENGAGED

No one will challenge the notion that these are serious times, fraught with serious challenges, in need of serious solutions. Raising support for worthy organizations is hard, noble work that pays off in the end for both the charity and the donor, as well as the person in the middle who has opened doors and invited support. While there is certainly “fun” in fundraising, there is also plenty of call for dedication and thoughtful action.

In a recent blog reports that in uncertain times, people are inclined to pull back from giving to even their favorite charities. Rick Dunham, president of Dunham & Company that commissioned the study notes,<sup>1</sup> “It is really incumbent on charities to be proactive in keeping their donors engaged and even inspired to maintain their current level of support.”

The twin challenges in the title of this article are ones often disregarded by campus ministries. First, while we know that financial support is dwindling and budgets are brittle, boards and staff often “play” with the task of fundraising as though slap-dash efforts and casual planning will garner the necessary resources to continue strong ministry.

Second, not enough effort is given to keeping in close touch with generous donors. That’s sometimes called “donor cultivation.” Perhaps a better term would be “nurturing vital friendships.” Those who know us well and support us faithfully expect to be cherished by us beyond the casual appearance of the annual fund appeal in their mailbox. We owe these good people a lot; we need to stay engaged with them throughout the year in ways that expand and deepen our relationship. Are snail mail and e-mail enough? Would a phone call make a difference? Would a

personal visit enhance the relationship? If you were to get serious and stay engaged, how would you do that?

Kim Klein, writing in *The Fundraising Journal*,<sup>2</sup> shares the ten things that are most important to her as an experienced fundraiser.

1. If you want money, you have to ask for it. Most people do not give because they don’t know your needs.
2. Thank before you bank. Show your appreciation immediately and sincerely.
3. Donors are not ATMs. Donors want to hear from you more often than just when you want money. Most money comes from people, and most of those people are not rich.
4. People have the right to say “no.”
5. To be good at fundraising, cultivate these three traits: (a) a belief in the cause, (b) the ability to have high hopes and low expectations, and (c) faith in the basic goodness of people.
6. Fundraising should not be confused with fund chasing, fund squeezing, or fund hoarding. Rather, seek the money you need, spend it wisely, and set some aside for emergencies or the future.
7. Fundraising is an exchange—people pay you to do work they cannot accomplish alone.
8. People’s anxieties about fundraising stem from their anxieties about money.
9. There are four steps to fundraising—plan, plan, plan, and work your plan.

These are serious challenges for tough times. Yet, in the end, focused planning and deepened relationships with donors will pay off in ways that will certainly make your ministry stronger.

<sup>1</sup>Raymond Flandez, <http://philanthropy.com/blogs/prospecting>, 9/9/2011

<sup>2</sup>Kim Klein, Grassroots Fundraising, 3781 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94611

## GIVING TRENDS

Each year for the past half-century, the Giving USA Foundation has issued a trend analysis, documenting the changes in philanthropy and the impact these changes make on recipient organizations. The key findings for the year just completed, 2010, include these salient observations.<sup>1</sup>

- ◆ Total estimated charitable giving in 2010 rose 3.8 percent, reflecting the modest economic upturn for the year. Total contributions reached \$290.89 billion.
- ◆ Giving by individuals rose 2.7 percent, which is consistent with the post-recessionary years over the last four decades. As the economy strengthened, individuals were encouraged and gave accordingly to causes they support. Individuals gave \$221.7 billion in 2010.
- ◆ Charitable bequests rose 18.8 percent, while giving by foundations remained level.
- ◆ Corporate giving rose 10.6 percent, the leader being pharmaceutical companies.
- ◆ Giving to religious causes rose only slightly, less than 1 percent, with congregations reporting very slow recovery in their benevolence income. This is compared with a decline of 1.6 percent between 2008 and 2009. Averaged out from 2008 through 2010, this is a total decline of minus .08 percent. Religious organizations continue receive the largest slice of the giving pie, roughly one-third of all contributions, or \$100.63 billion.
- ◆ Giving to other sectors, such as education, health, public-society benefit programs, and the arts and humanities saw increases between 1.5 and 6.2 percent. Giving to international affairs rose 15.3 percent, the largest increase to any sector in 2010.
- ◆ Foundation grant-making reached \$41 billion, half of that amount from family foundations, a growing source of donations as families take more initiative in directing their legacy dollars.

For those of us working with religious organizations, this report is both cautious and encouraging. New sources of contributions may be from family foundations and bequests. While donors continue to support causes that reflect their values, they are doing so with more discernment and selectivity. Obviously this is a helicopter view of total philanthropic giving in the US over the course of one year. It would be worthy research to compare these indicators with data available from denominational sources, both nationally and locally, to see if trends with your constituent groups mirror the trends reported by Giving USA.

<sup>1</sup>The Giving USA report is published annually by The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. The full report is available online at [www.givingusa.org](http://www.givingusa.org)

### 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. The cost of the training services are shared with the ECMT. Board members and staff are encouraged to take advantage of this continuing offer by the ECMT. Workshops will be held at various locations during the 2011-2012 academic year. Application forms are available on the ECMT Website at [www.higheredmin.org](http://www.higheredmin.org)

### 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. Each issue deals with an aspect of fund raising, such as the annual appeal, visiting donors, trends, or tuning up the board.

*Ask & Receive* is published on behalf of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team at 2358 151st Avenue NW,

What makes a board great is “passion for the mission, clear expectations and clearly defined roles, a sense of camaraderie, and enough time to do the job right. It also helps to have a bit of flexibility, humor, and humility.” Andy Robinson (Great Boards for Small Groups)

## STREAMLINING BOARD WORK

At the risk of stating the obvious for many board members, let me just say that “board work can be very boring!” That doesn’t mean that it’s inconsequential or irrelevant. It means that somehow the work of this talented, committed, insightful group of people has become less than it once was or might even be again.

There are reasons for this malaise, to be sure, and if addressed can be the corrective necessary to bring your board or committee into a new, exciting time of its life.

One problem that I’ve observed in the boards that I have served with/on is the “time spent on the trivial.” An inordinate amount of time, both at the meetings and beyond, is given to tasks that belong more in the purview of the staff than the board member. This includes such things as photocopying, office management, phone calls, letter writing, and student leader oversight. While these may indeed be necessary functions of the ministry, clear lines of responsibility need to be drawn for both staff and board. Micro-management is not a noble form of governance.

Another problem is poor preparation on the part of board leadership. The agenda has not been confirmed prior to the meeting. Reports are not forthcoming, including even the treasurer’s report sometimes. No distinction has been made between the critical concerns that must be addressed now and the lesser issues that can take a back seat or be tackled in other ways.

One way of streamlining a meeting is to use a **consent agenda**, a bundle of items that is voted on, without discussion, as a package. Items commonly found in a consent agenda include: minutes of the previous meeting, confirmation of a decision discussed previously, staff reports, committee reports, informational materials, routine correspondence, and updated organizational lists/documents. Other items that may/may not be included, because of their significance, are audit reports, treasurer’s reports, and executive

committee decisions. (Example, if a finance committee monitors monthly reports, the whole board may only need to see the quarterly reports.) A test to inclusion is whether the item is for information only or if it contains something that warrants board discussion.

Along with the agenda for the meeting, the consent agenda should be sent to all members several days prior to the actual meeting. That way, if there are questions, they can be clarified prior to the meeting, where “just a quick question” is not appropriate. Either an item is removed and discussed or it stays put. Any member may ask to remove an item from the consent agenda; nothing should be hidden or railroaded. The minutes should include the vote on the consent agenda, including a listing of all items.

Staff and board leadership may need to ratchet up their collaborative style if this is to work effectively. There may need to be more attention given to timing and detail with a consent agenda, but considerable time will be saved at the actual meetings—and the boredom factor will be greatly diminished. While traditional board meetings spend a lot of time on the past, consent agendas help the board focus on the significant issues of the future.

If board/committee members are indeed “stakeholders,” there should be something “at stake” at every meeting. Members need to know that their presence, their ideas, and their vote is critical to the ongoing mission of the organization. If not, they may just as well stay home. To that end, the meeting agenda needs to be crafted in such a way that there is ample time devoted to consideration and implementation of crucial decisions. Perhaps a time limit can be placed on each item, giving the lion’s share of time to important items. Also, an introduction of upcoming items can be included on the agenda to alert members to future decisions and help them start preliminary work and thinking.

At the end of each meeting, set aside 5 minutes to do an evaluation. What went well? What could be improved? How can we deal with trivial items and spend more time on the necessary decisions that are vital to the ministry?