

Winners of the 2008 CASE Research Awards

John Grenzebach Research Awards

Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation

Kimberly Nehls

“Presidential Transitions During Capital Campaigns: Perspectives of Chief Development Officers”

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Abstract

In the past few decades, the length of capital campaigns at institutions of higher education has increased, while collegiate presidential tenures have been shortening. Prior to this study, presidential transition during campaigns had not been previously analyzed. Therefore, the objective of this paper was to better understand the effects of presidential transition during capital campaigns from the perspective of the chief development officer (CDO). Nine CDOs who experienced presidential transitions during campaigns were interviewed. Participating institutions included Florida State University, Millikin University, Muhlenberg College, University of Indianapolis, University of North Florida, University of Redlands, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Villanova University, and Wake Forest University.

Schlossberg’s theory of transition served as the theoretical framework for the study and formed the four research questions which reflected Schlossberg’s four S’s: situation, self, supports, and strategies. The situation was defined differently at each institution, although they had some similarities, such as campaigns of seven years or more, successful goal completions, and transitions that occurred after the campaign went public. Most presidential transitions had a negative and restricting effect on campaign work, even when the transitions went smoothly.

The nine CDOs that participated in this study had an average of 24 years work in fundraising, and 15 years in their respective institutions. The participants relied on the following traits to help them navigate the change in leadership: patience, perseverance, work drive, flexibility, teamwork, confidence, altruism, resiliency and focus. Four groups of individuals were cited as most often providing support during a presidential transition: the Board of Trustees, the development staff, the incoming president and senior staff colleagues. Lastly, the strategies for dealing with a presidential transition during a campaign included: a) providing input in the selection of the new president; b) communication with constituency; c) education of the incoming president; d) involving the new president in the campaign at the outset; and, e) identifying new funding priorities. Recommendations for a CDO dealing with a change in leadership during a campaign are outlined in the final chapter.

Outstanding Published Scholarship

Patrick Rooney with Melissa S. Brown, Reema T. Bhakta, Heidi K. Frederick, Cynthia Hyatte and Shawn Miller

“American Express Charitable Gift Survey (2007)”

The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University

Abstract

The American Express Charitable Gift Survey is the first nationally representative study to address two “Frequently Asked Questions” in the world of charity: 1) How much do people give at any one time to different types of charitable recipients? and, 2) do online and offline donations differ in size? The study also asked people why they give online or why they didn’t.

The researchers asked a random sample of Americans in the last two weeks of September 2007 about their most recent gift. The survey reached 1,300 households in a nationally representative sample and researchers contacted another 205 to obtain responses from 300 online donor households (an oversample of online donors). About two-thirds (65 percent) of study participants had given to charity in the previous year, 6 percent of whom had given online. The study examined more than 900 online and offline gifts.

The median charitable donation, whether online or not, was \$50. Two-thirds of donations were \$100 or less but the overall the average gift amount was \$172. The online donation amount (\$165) compared to the offline amount (\$174) shows that there was no statistically significant difference. The large number of gifts under \$100 demonstrates that nonprofit organizations rely on many low-dollar donations.

Convenience or speed was the top reason respondents gave for giving online (64 percent of online donors). Not having a computer was the top reason for NOT giving online (24 percent of offline-only donors), illustrating that charities' online presence is important. Regardless of income, the single largest reason—after not having a computer—why people did not give online was not being aware of online contribution options. More than one quarter (28 percent) of offline-only donors said that they did not give online because they couldn't find an online giving site.

Nearly 6 in 10 donors said they gave about the same during the holidays as during the rest of the year. However, among all donors, on average, 24 percent of donated dollars are given between Thanksgiving and New Year’s.

Alice L. Beeman Research Awards

Outstanding Master’s Thesis or Doctoral Dissertation

Dawn Edmiston

“An Examination of Integrated Marketing Communication in U.S. Public Institutions of Higher Education” (2007)

University of Maryland University College

Abstract

This dissertation examined the strategic process of integrated marketing communication (IMC) and its application in U.S. public institutions of higher education (IHEs). Although many colleges teach the

concepts of IMC, the literature suggests that far fewer actually practice it. And yet, IMC has the potential to deliver several advantages to IHEs such as higher quality of communications, cost efficiencies, improved selectivity of students, positive impact on financial sources and enhanced brand identification.

A recent explosion of media venues has dramatically altered the communication environment and has caused a fundamental shift in how colleges and universities promote their institutions. The higher education market has become increasingly competitive, as institutions strive to build and reinforce their “brands” by attracting the finest students. Thus, this research seeks to understand whether IHEs utilize integrated marketing communication and, if so, how such efforts contribute to their institutional success.

Quantitative survey research was conducted to analyze the impact of IMC on 82 leading U.S. public colleges and universities (as ranked by *U.S. News & World Report*). The Four Stages of IMC framework, based on studies of the American Productivity and Quality Center, served as the foundation for the research. In addition, the concepts of open systems theory were examined as possible factors that influence the implementation of IMC. To further expand upon the findings of the survey, qualitative research was conducted with nine of the survey respondents.

The research revealed that several variables impact IMC in U.S. public IHEs. They include leadership, formal communication mechanisms and open systems orientation. In addition, IMC was shown to contribute to heightened student selectivity and institutional brand recognition. The research also considered whether differences exist between an institution’s IMC level and its Carnegie classification, geographic location and *U.S. News & World Report* ranking. Finally, the research revealed that the IHEs do not necessarily follow a linear process through the Four States of IMC framework. Thus, a modified framework is suggested for future research consideration.

Outstanding Published Scholarship

Christopher Simpson

Weathering the Storm: Protecting Your Brand in the Worst of Times (2007)

SimpsonScarborough

Abstract (from publisher)

What do college basketball icon Bob Knight, former U.S. Senator Gary Hart, and former University of South Carolina President James B. Holderman have in common? All were at the center of a crisis of enormous consequence and all are part of the hard won experience of Christopher Simpson, author of this crisis communications guide.

Simpson, a former newspaper reporter, press secretary in the U.S. Senate and marketing/media/crisis chief at three universities, provides a step-by-step approach to creating a crisis plan that can ready your organization to withstand a media assault when times get tough.

Along the way, Simpson gives you an insider’s look at the firing of Coach Knight, The Texas A&M bonfire tragedy, the downfall of the once-rising star Holderman, and many other crises, all from a PR perspective.

“On any given day, you are ripe targets for a full-blown crisis,” writes Simpson. “Too few institutional leaders plan effectively. And when crises happen, you scramble, play catch up, and too often, don’t get a seat at the senior staff table when lawyers blossom like kudzu and PR decisions are made well outside the court of public opinion.”

H.S. Warwick Research Awards

Outstanding Master’s Thesis or Doctoral Dissertation

Wendy Levine

“Communications and Alumni Relations: What is the Correlation Between and Institution’s Communications Vehicles and Alumni Annual Giving?” (2007)

University of San Francisco

Alumni are an important source of colleges’ philanthropic support; however, alumni giving varies widely. This paper examines the relationship between colleges’ communications pieces and their undergraduate alumni giving. To test the question, 250 surveys were sent to directors of annual giving and development at private U.S. colleges that were members of the Council of Advancement Support Education (CASE). Fifty-eight surveys were returned.

Institutions were asked to provide information in four areas: the institution’s background and size, giving landscape, undergraduate alumni giving, and communications. Data collected from respondents were tested to determine if there were significant associations between: (1) the number, type, and frequency of communication vehicles and alumni dollars raised; (2) the number, type, and frequency of communication vehicles and percentages of alumni participation; and (3) whether some communications pieces exhibited a greater positive relationship to alumni giving than others.

Analysis of responses revealed that the overall number of communications pieces sent to alumni was not associated with higher alumni giving levels or participation. The frequency with which alumni magazines and alumni electronic newsletters were sent was positively associated with giving. Results were mixed for annual fund and campaign appeal letters. Additional findings included: (1) smaller colleges had higher rates of participation than larger colleges; (2) schools with a larger percentage of male alumni received more money to their general and annual funds; and (3) alumni from undergraduate institutions participated more often than undergraduate alumni from schools that also had graduate schools.

Outstanding Published Scholarship

Michael A. Gottfried and Erica L. Johnson

Solicitation and Donation: An Econometric Evaluation of Alumni Generosity in Higher Education

The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania

This paper evaluates the relationship between solicitation of alumni and their levels of giving within institutions of higher education. The issue is important for universities because the average cost of university tuition has increased dramatically over the past 20 years at an annual growth rate larger than the United States CPI (Harvard University Factbook, 2005 – 06). By 2003, alumni donations across all US universities had become on average the largest source of donations to institutions of higher learning and in 2005 had risen to 26.6 percent of all university donations.

This paper explores the effect of alumni solicitation on their level of donations. The researchers employed a fixed effects model on the largest and longest-spanning panel dataset available on alumni giving. This dataset consists of 2,986 universities and colleges in the United States over a 12-year period. Secondly, they examined the 117 schools most highly regarded in the US, as determined by the *US News and World Report*. In the regression analyses they conducted, they determined that solicitation efforts do indeed provide a positive marginal effect on levels of alumni donations.