

STATE OF OUR PROFESSION: *A GLOBAL VIEW OF ADVANCEMENT*



CASE President John Lippincott
(Dec. 4, 2007, joint CASE District VII and VIII conference)



Good afternoon, I'm John Lippincott, president of CASE.

I want to talk with you about our profession but first let me say a few words about the state of your professional association...

The reason for our successes can be summed up in one word: volunteers. I'd like to recognize several of those volunteers with us today...

STATE OF OUR PROFESSION:
A GLOBAL VIEW OF ADVANCEMENT



CASE President John Lippincott

I want to talk with you about the state of our profession, which has become truly global.

CASE now has offices in Washington, London, and Singapore.

From my travels to Europe and Asia and throughout North America, I have had the extraordinary opportunity to see educational advancement at work in many parts of the world.

And I have been struck by the sense of common purpose and by the transferability of best practice wherever I go.


The climate is changing for
educational institutions
around the globe



There are certainly variations from country to country and from institution to institution, but much of those differences are superficial and are often related to language.

I will give you a quick example from a press conference we held in Singapore in September to highlight the opening of our office there....

Throughout this conference you will have lots of opportunities to discuss the particulars of our profession. I want to step back and take a broader view, a global view. And I want simply to remind you of some of the issues facing educational institutions and the implications of those issues for advancement professionals.



Advancement
professionals will
be at the forefront in
managing this change

As it happens, the major changes impacting our institutions fall squarely within the purview of advancement professionals.

After all, we have the primary responsibility on our campuses for external relations.

And the changes our institutions face are being driven by external forces.

This presents us with great challenges and even greater opportunities.



If we are going to meet those challenges and seize those opportunities, we need to approach our work with clear focus and renewed dedication.

So I'd like to spend the next half hour or so considering three broad approaches to advancement that are essential to our success.

1. Understand the major changes
in our environment



A good place to begin is by understanding this new environment in which our institutions are operating.

I will focus my comments on higher education, but I want to acknowledge that many of these same issues and strategies apply to independent schools as well.



Clearly one of the key drivers of change in higher education is money.

Costs will continue to escalate

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Access} \\ \hline \text{Excellence} \\ \hline + \quad \text{Inflation} \\ \hline \text{Higher Costs} \end{array}$$

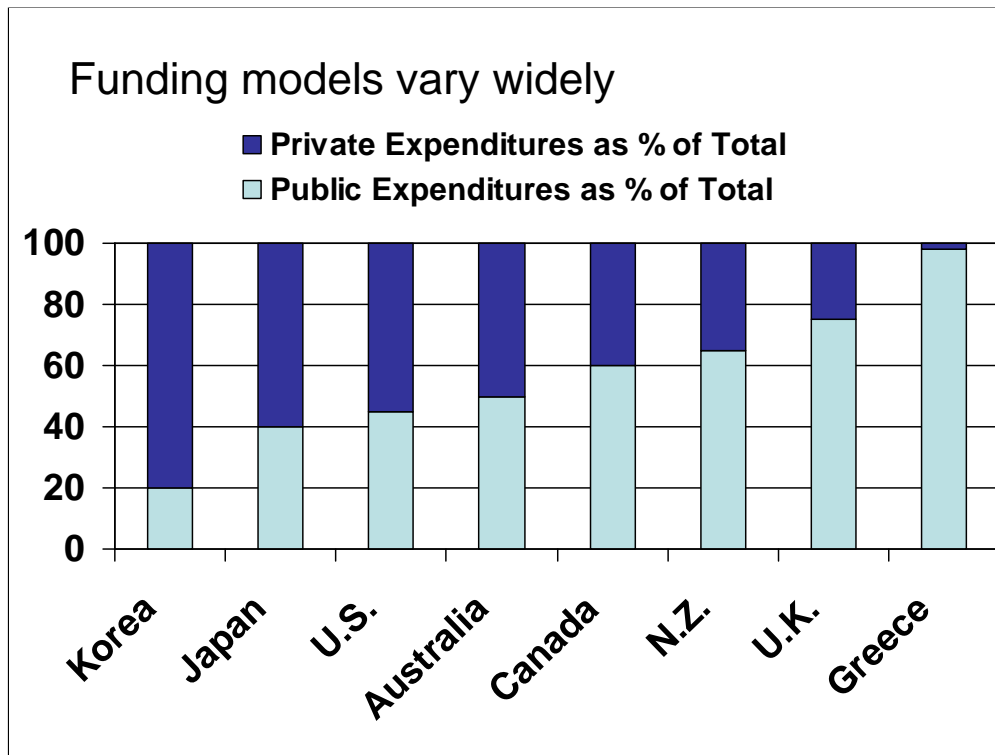
Some simple arithmetic illustrates why money matters so much.

I have not seen a government report or a university plan that in one way or another doesn't call for greater access to higher education for people from all economic backgrounds.

I have not seen a government report or a university plan that does not include the words excellence and quality.

Access and excellence are both inherently expensive, particularly in the context of higher education.

Add to this equation the effects of inflation and the bottom line is that your institution's costs are going to continue to escalate.



The universal debate is who should bear the brunt of those increased costs.

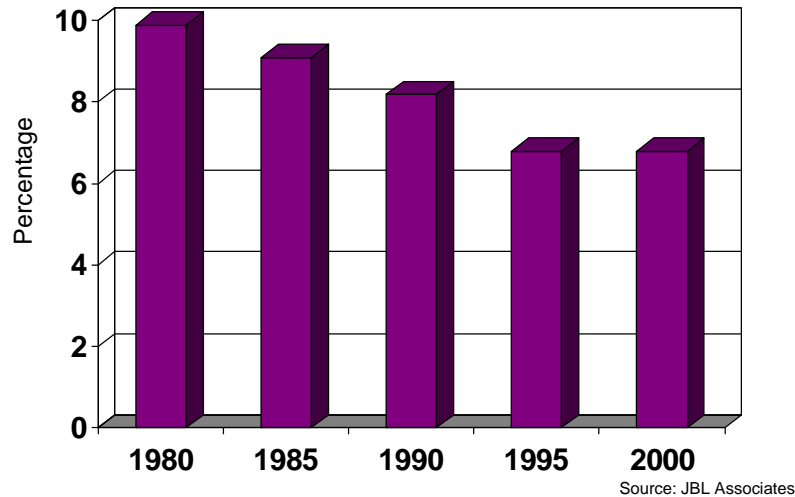
The answers range widely around the world.

From Korea, which relies heavily on private sector funds, primarily student fees, to Greece, where the taxpayer covers almost the full cost.

The U.S. sits just below the 50/50 point on this scale. Canada sits just above that point.

Support is shifting from public to private

Percentage of States' Budgets Spent on Higher Education, 1980-2000



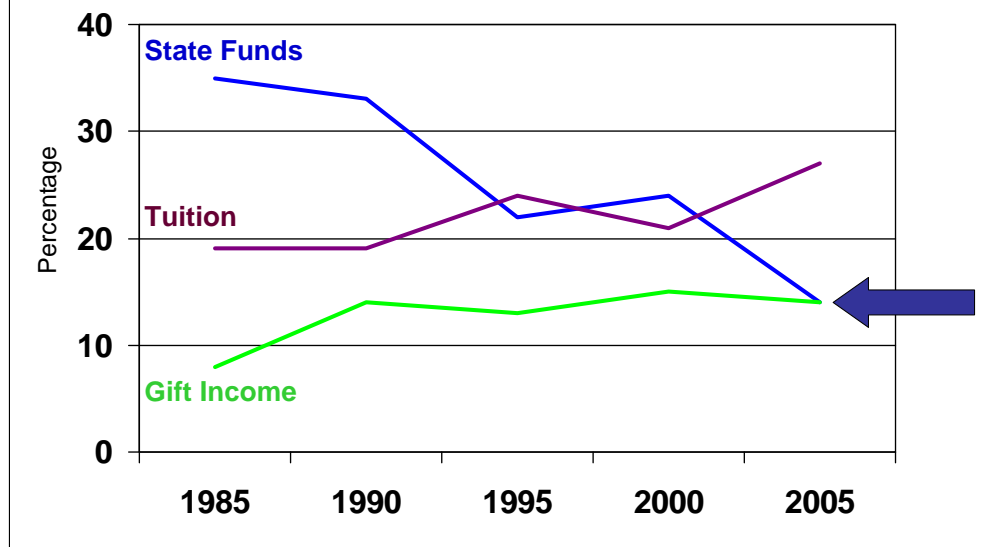
And the trend in the U.S., as in most of the world, is toward greater reliance on private sources of revenue.

Consider, for example, the portion of state budgets dedicated to higher education. There has been a precipitous decline over the last two decades.

And the predictions are that trend will only continue downward.

Support is shifting from public to private

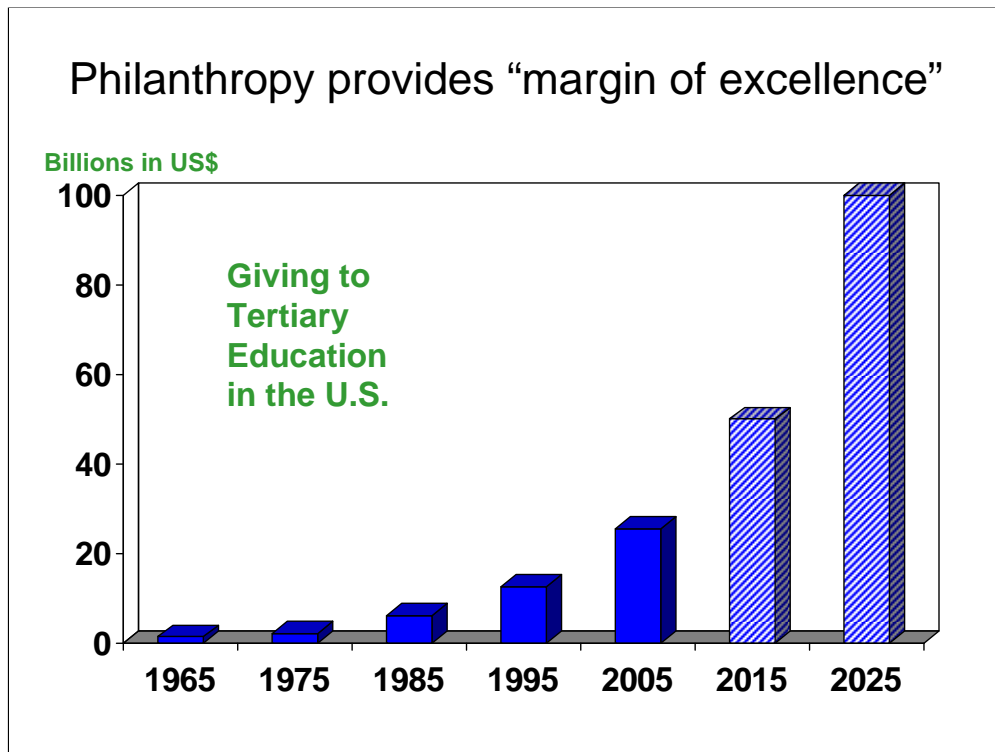
Percentage of University of Virginia's Budget by Source, 1985-2005



One particularly dramatic example of what has happened to public funding can be found at the University of Virginia.

State funding has been steadily dropping and tuition steadily rising.

What is particularly remarkable is that income from current gifts and endowment is now equal to the amount the university receives from the state for its academic operations.



And so it is that universities are mounting larger and larger fundraising campaigns. The good news is that these campaigns have been remarkably successful.

Giving to American higher education has been doubling every decade since the 1960s. If that trend continues, American universities will be raising \$100 billion a year in charitable contributions by 2025.

And that's not just the Stanford-effect. Half that money will go to public universities.



One of the most dramatic changes in the environment in which our institutions must operate is the communications revolution.

In fact, I would contend that it is more difficult these days to attract attention than it is to attract money.

We are in an era of information overload.

The number of text messages sent each day exceeds the population of the planet.

Forget
senders
and
receivers



For those of you who studied communications theory, you will recall it was all about senders and receivers.

Today it's all about hunters and gatherers.

The information consumer is now in charge, deciding what information she wants and where she wants to get it.

Use the
technology



Your best communications strategy is to join the revolution.

Adopt online strategies for fundraising, alumni relations, public relations and marketing.

Those who have online fundraising efforts are seeing double-digit and even triple-digit growth each year.

Duke University now raises \$3.5 million annually from its online approach.

Control what
you can;
monitor what
you can't



The hardest part about joining the communications revolution is that it means giving up control ... or rather acknowledging that you've already lost much of the control you once had.

So focus your energies on those parts of the process over which you truly do have control – such as your message.

And pay attention to what is happening outside of your control – in the blogosphere, in online communities, even in wikipedia.

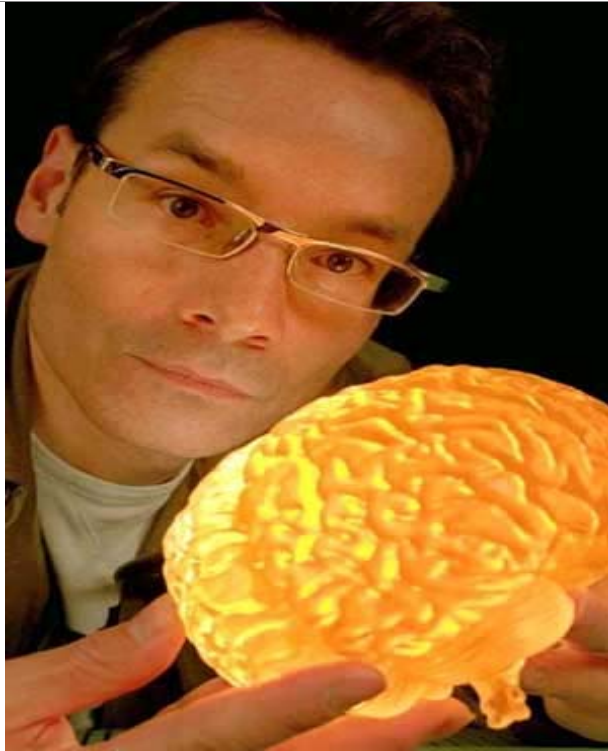
Fortunately, there are plenty of tools that automatically monitor references to your institution in cyberspace.



Monitoring online sources leads naturally to the importance of research for an effective advancement operation.

It's useful to think of our work as applied social science. And you can't be involved in applied social science unless it is grounded in research.

Know Your Donors



Just to reinforce the notion that our work has a scientific basis, consider a recent study by a team of researchers funded by the National Institutes of Health.

They used brain imaging to monitor subjects as they considered donating to charitable causes. When a person chose to donate money, neurons in the portion of the brain that has long been associated with food and sex started firing. Doing good really does feel good.

The more we understand the motivations of our donors – and other key constituents -- the more successful we will be as advancement officers.

Know What Works



Another recent study employed an MIT robot named Kismet.

The question at hand was whether being watched increases generosity.

And, indeed, when Kismet's image was on the computer screen watching them, the subjects of the experiment were 30 percent more generous in their decisions about giving.

One implication: eye contact works. Another implication: Kismet may be the solution to the critical shortage of major gift fundraisers.

Scan the
environment
regularly



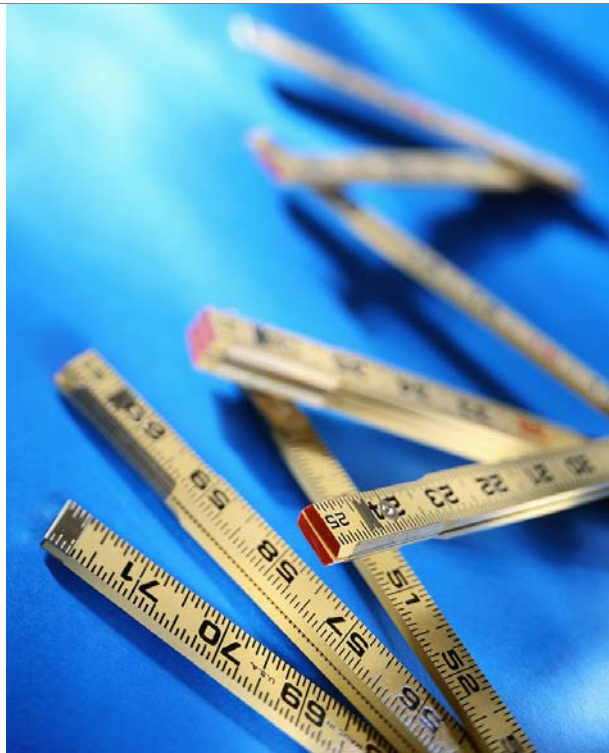
Of course, the most important research is the kind you can do every day in your office. You should be scanning the environment, looking for issues and information that have implications for your institution.

For example, you should be an active and avid consumer of demographic information. You can learn a great deal just by looking at the population trends for the U.S.

As noted earlier, the internet provides an incredible tool for gathering such information.

You can also create networks of people – staff across your campus, colleagues at other universities, alumni, advisory group members – and ask them to feed you intelligence.

Measure
attitudes and
behaviors



In addition to scanning the environment, you should be regularly measuring the attitudes and behaviors of your key constituencies.

Often in advancement, we measure staff outputs. How many events did we hold, how many press releases did we issue, how many donors did we call?

These can be useful employee management tools, but to assess the effectiveness of your advancement operations you need to focus on what you want your external constituencies to think and to do.

What are their current attitudes toward your institution and what do you want them to be? What will it take to move the needle?

Evaluate
your
progress



I also recommend that you benchmark your operation against peers. One of the new services CASE is about to offer is a benchmarking platform.

This online tool will allow communities of practice – say community colleges in the Northwest – to agree on a set of metrics against which they want to compare themselves. The tool will be available to members in February.

You should also evaluate your progress against your internal milestones. Where do you expect to be at a given stage in a project and how far have you gotten?

Research also means taking informed risks, pilot testing new approaches and then assessing the outcomes.

2. Design your advancement program to help your institution weather the changes

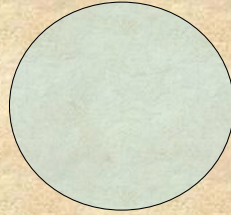


The second key point I want to make about your advancement operation is that it should be directly and intimately linked to the overall goals of the organization.



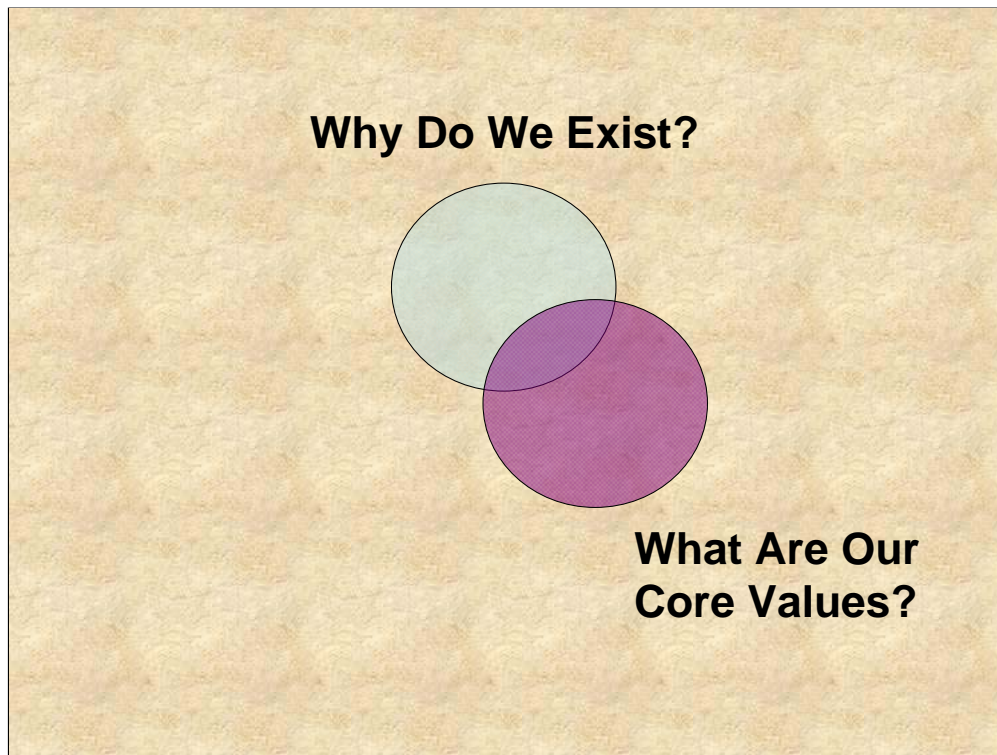
As you think about the goals for your alumni, communications, marketing, and fundraising efforts, a great place to begin is with the institutional mission.

Why Do We Exist?



Presumably there is a mission statement to which you can refer.

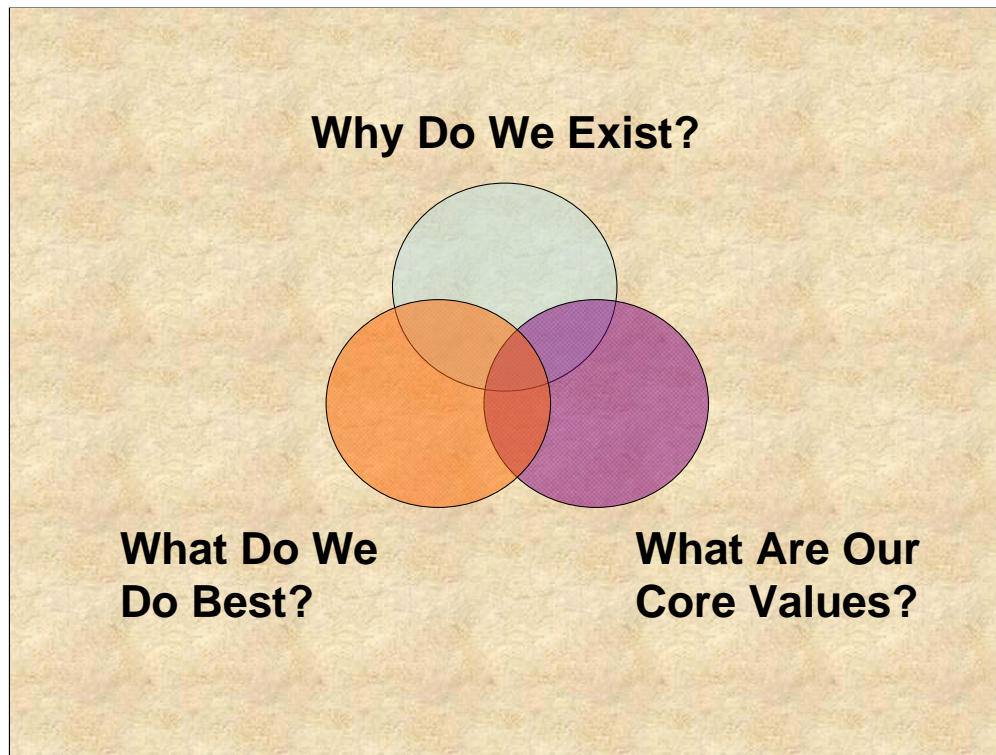
If not, simply ask yourself – why does my university exist? Why was it created? Why has it been sustained? What would be lost if the university were not here?



Also ask yourself about the underlying values of the institution?

What do we cherish most? What are we obliged to protect against all threats?

If a crisis were to arise, what principles would inform our statements and our actions?



Another crucial question about the mission of your institution is what do you do best?

If you have read Jim Collins' book *Good to Great*, you will recall that he labels this notion the hedgehog concept.

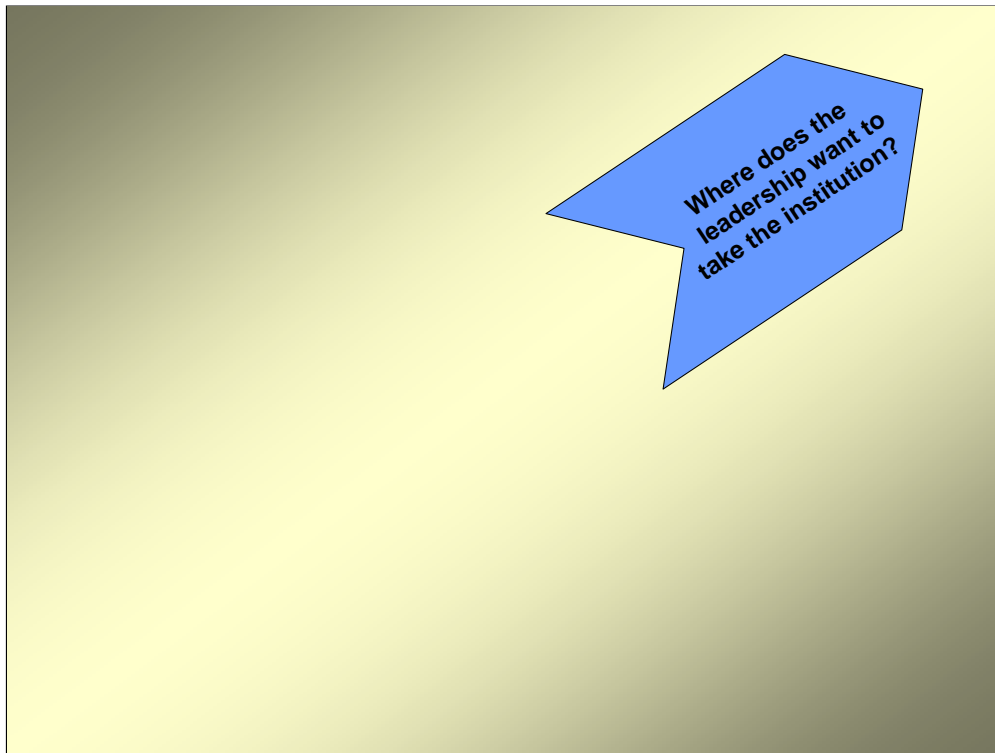
(If you have not read *Good to Great*, I highly recommend it to you.)

By understanding, building on, and promoting what you do best, you have the chance to truly distinguish your university.

And differentiating yourself in this marketplace is increasingly important to institutional success.



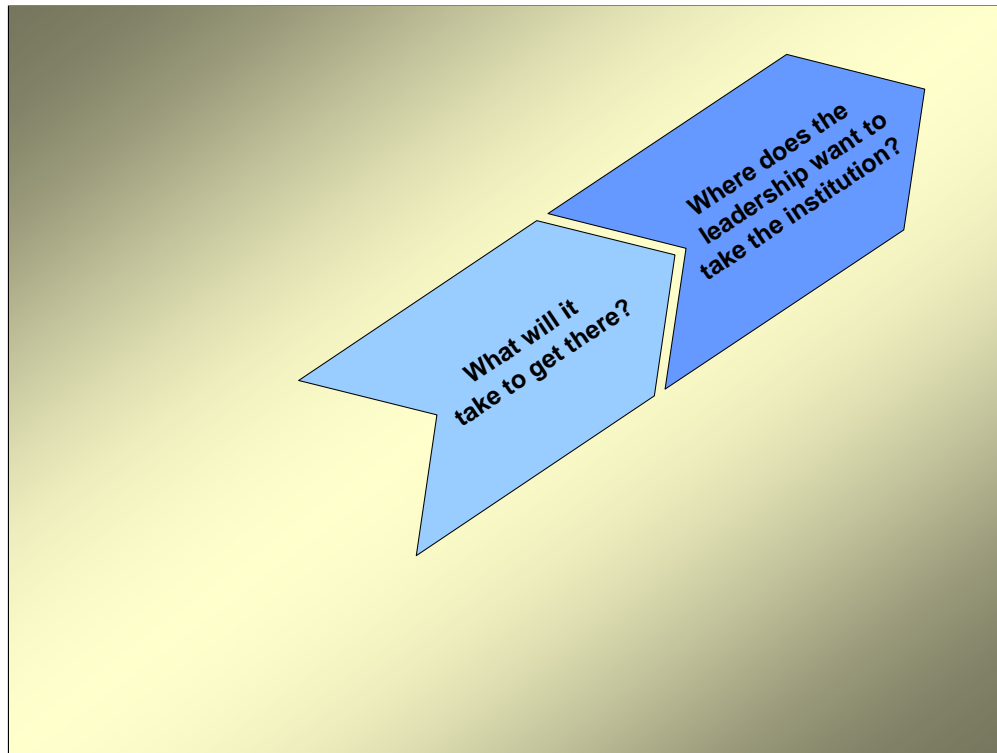
As you develop your advancement plan, the next step is to consider where the institution is headed.



It is likely that the leadership of the institution – the CEO, the governing board, the academic cabinet – have settled on some short-range and long-range goals.

Perhaps these goals take the form of a full-fledged strategic plan, perhaps they are formulated as strategic priorities, perhaps they take their cue from legislatively established goals.

If there is no strategic plan, then consider it an opportunity. As advancement officers, you might want to volunteer to facilitate a strategic planning process for the institution.

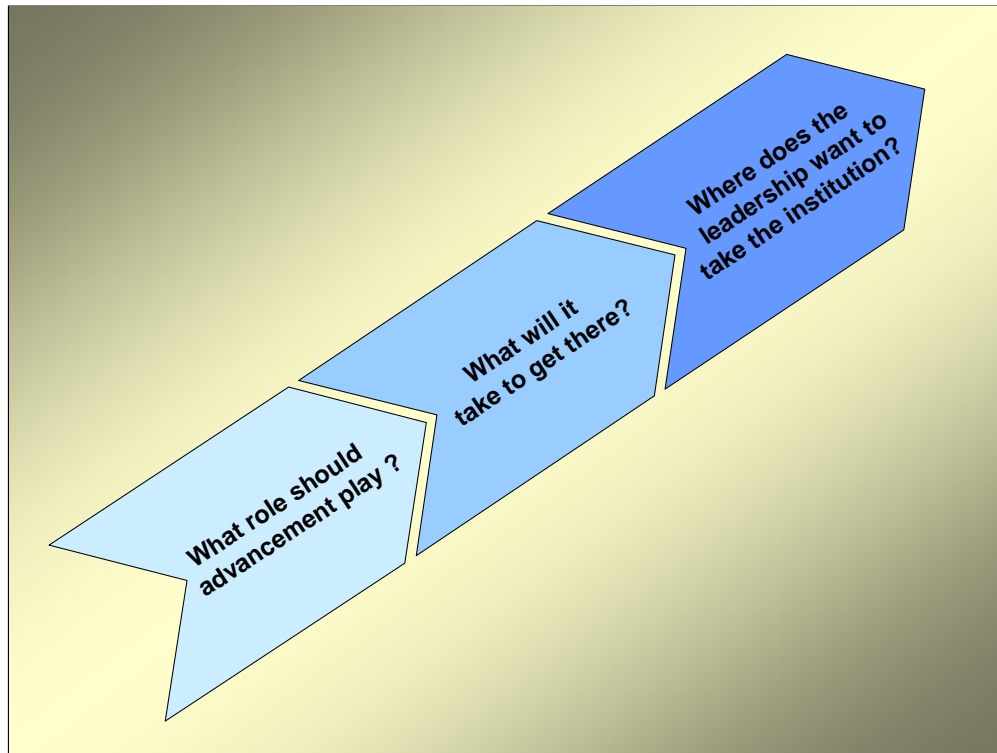


Once you know where the institution is headed, the next question is what will it take to get there.

What financial resources will be required and where are they likely to come from?

Who will need to embrace and endorse the goals to help ensure your success?

What tools do you need to have in place to build the future you have envisioned?



Out of that understanding of the resources required should come a pretty clear picture of the role that advancement needs to play.

Where does philanthropic support fit into the picture? How can alumni help advance the institutional goals? What does the plan suggest regarding public relations and marketing efforts?

By linking advancement goals to institutional goals you achieve two things:

First, you ensure your efforts are truly strategic and contribute to institutional success.

Second, you increase the likelihood of getting the support you need from the institution, a point to which I will return.



If, as I asserted earlier, advancement is applied social science, then clearly the practice of advancement is about working with people.

Much of your work in support of your institution will focus on building relationships with individuals who are critical to your success.

Who do
we serve?



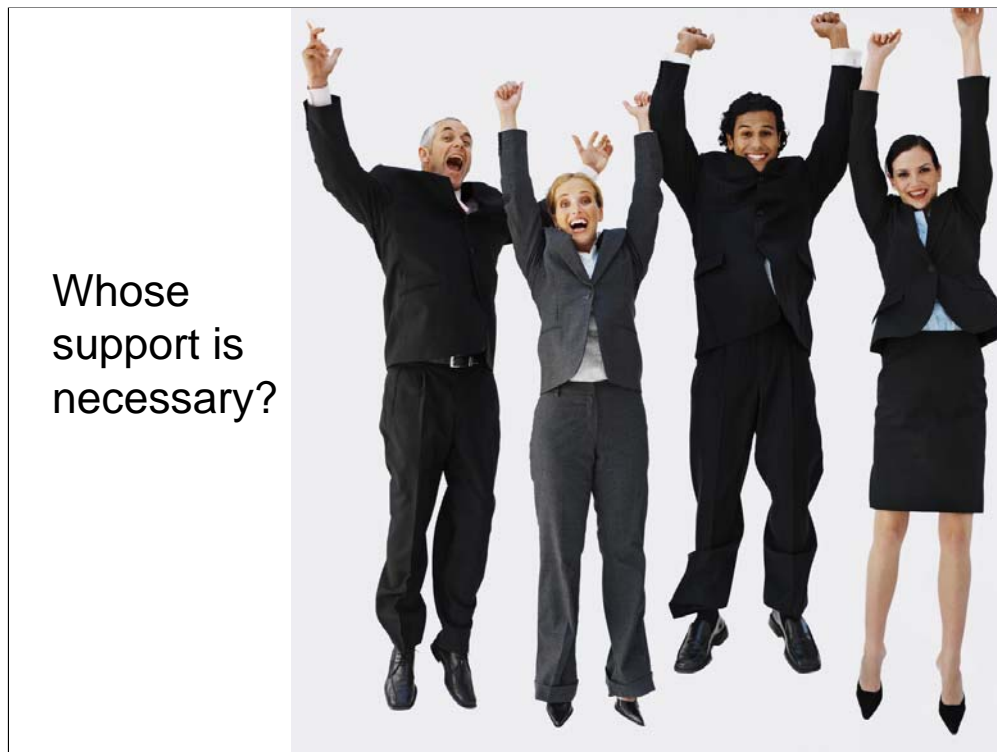
Among the most important constituents are those your institution is dedicated to serving. And chief among those are students.

Faculty, of course, have the primary responsibility to serve students.

Nonetheless, students should be central to your thinking about the role you play. If you have responsibility for marketing, you clearly need to be thinking student psychographics.

If you are the alumni director, you know better than anyone that the best way to create happy alumni is to make sure that first they are happy students.

If you are a fundraiser, you know that donors are often motivated by a desire to help the next generation of students.



Whose
support is
necessary?

The next group of people to consider is those whose support is essential if you are to achieve your goals.

As advancement officers, we tend naturally to want to engage anyone and everyone who walks in the door.

That's an admirable personal quality but a dangerous managerial approach.

We have to be somewhat hardnosed about which people can really make a difference for our institution. And they may not be the people we particularly want to hang out with.

However, it is your responsibility to make sure the key players are on your team – donors, alumni, government officials, student leaders, opinion leaders, community leaders.

Whose
opposition
is likely?



You also need to think about opponents. When you look over the institution's plans, ask yourself – who might stand in our way?

If your plans include expanding the physical plant, obviously you want to consider the impact on the neighbors.

If your plans include elimination of an academic program, you want to consider the reaction from alumni.

If your plans include accepting corporate gifts, you should consider the reaction of those who might take issue with certain business practices.

When you have identified those possible opponents, you need to think about whether to coopt them, preempt them, or even embrace them (as Wal-Mart has with environmentalists).



3. Coordinate all advancement-related activities to maximize their impact

You've gained a clear understanding of the external forces shaping your institution.

You've linked your advancement goals to the goals of the institution as a whole.

Now you need to marshal your resources to achieve those goals.



This is where I get up on my soapbox. It doesn't matter how your advancement operations are organized. The alumni office may report to one part of the university and the fundraising office to another. Communications may have a direct reporting relationship to the president and marketing may not.

Your fundraisers may all work out of the same central office or work out of each of the academic departments.

Whatever the organizational model, the most effective advancement programs are those where the functions are deliberately and consistently integrated. What does that mean?

Set
common
goals



It means that alumni relations, communications, marketing, and fundraising have agreed-upon, overarching goals.

As noted earlier, many of those goals will follow directly from the institutional plan.

By agreeing on goals upfront, the various advancement units not only acknowledge they are on the same team but also are following the same game plan.

Develop
shared
strategies



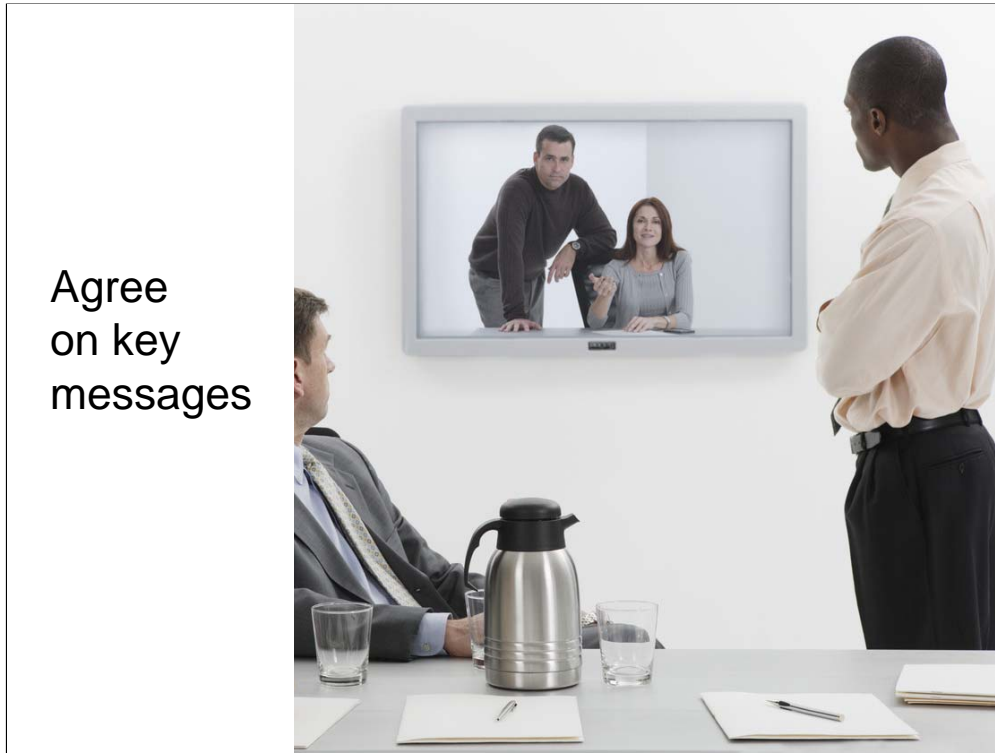
Having agreed on the game plan, the units can then work on the play book.

That play book should detail how, for example, the communications efforts will support fundraising efforts, through publications, media relations, and public relations.

I want to be clear that the support needs to be mutual. It is not all about every other advancement office supporting the fundraising office.

Perhaps the best way to look at the complementary roles of the advancement offices is to think in terms of lifetime engagement with a constituent – from the student applying to college to the alumna planning her estate.

Agree
on key
messages



It is also critically important that the advancement offices agree on the key messages they are sharing with their respective constituents.

The basic themes the institution stresses should remain consistent no matter who the speaker is. Of course, those themes should be adapted and packaged in ways that are appropriate to each audience.

But if you are going to be heard through the communications cacophony, you have to be clear and consistent in your message and you have got to repeat it. Ultimately what you want is to hear your students, your alumni and your donors playing your own messages back to you.



And that leads to my next piece of advice, which is to actively engage those who are affiliated with your institution – especially faculty, staff, and students.

Get out of
your office



And to do that, you need to get out of your office.

Eat lunch in the dining hall.

Attend performances and lectures.

Volunteer for campus committees.

Audit a course.

Move your office.

All this to find out what faculty are up to, what students are interested in, what's new on campus.

It's a great way not only to develop relationships but to develop stories you can tell in your own outreach to external audiences.

Connect
the inside
with the
outside



Once you have made your own internal connections, think about ways to build connections between your campus colleagues and the outside world.

Connect alumni with their favorite faculty.

Connect donors to the student scholarship recipient.

Connect staff with community leaders.

On this last point, studies have found that one of the most trusted sources of information about the university are insiders who are not paid to represent the university. Often people will look to their neighbors who work on campus to get the real scoop on what is happening at your institution.

Recognize
your allies



Remember, staff are your first impression people. Receptionists, security officers, buildings and grounds staff. All interact regularly with the public and create an image of your institution. That's why they need to be part of the advancement effort.

Meet with them to discuss the importance of their role. Recognize those who do a good job of creating positive impressions. Profile them in your internal publications. Honor them at staff meetings. Send letters to their supervisors. Not only does it make that person feel good, it encourages others to emulate him or her.

Of course, there are folks who will resist being part of the effort. Don't waste a lot of time on them.



The other very important cadre of adjunct advancement officers are your volunteers.

None of us have enough staff. And we probably never will.

So to get the job done, we need to call on our friends.

Help alumni
help you



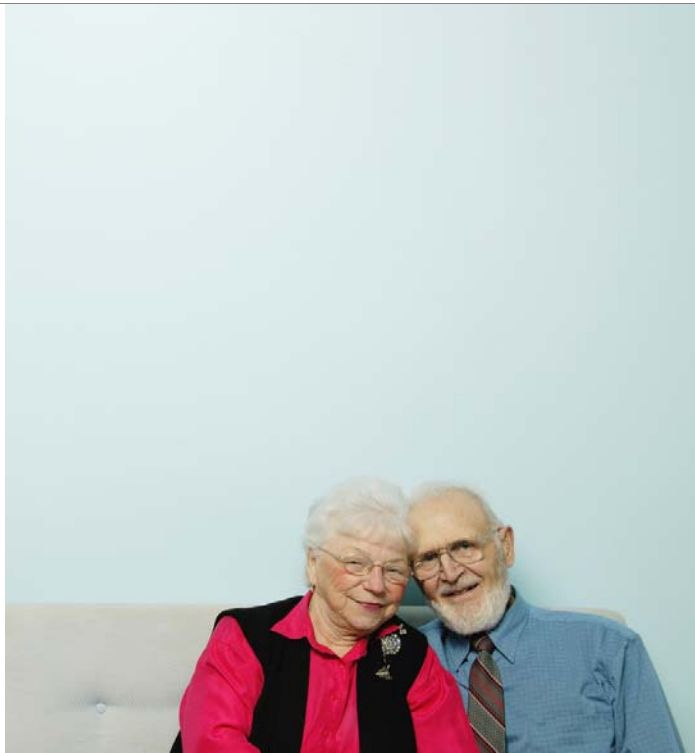
Probably the most underutilized resource is the alumni body. Some of you have literally hundreds of thousands of graduates.

Think about the impact they can have as a marketing force, talking about the strengths of your institution in their interactions with family and friends.

Think about the impact of a mobilized alumni body in ensuring government legislation that is helpful and not harmful to your institution.

Think about the impact of each alum making a contribution, however modest, and encouraging classmates to get in the habit of giving.

Let donors
tell their
story



And when it comes to fundraising, your best askers are often your best givers. Someone who has already made a major gift to your institution will have enormous credibility with a prospective donor. Let them explain why they gave, what it meant to them. If they are not available to do so in person, include their stories in your publications and in your videos.

After all, our job is to tell stories about our institutions that are so compelling that others want to be part of that story.

Also, talk to your major donors about introducing you to their spheres of influence. Who do they know that you should know – government officials, opinion leaders, community activists?

Grow your
friends



You need to continually widen your circle of friends and you need to continually nurture those friendships.

Stewardship often falls by the wayside as we chase the next gift. But remember, it is far easier to get a repeat gift than a new gift.

Stewardship can take many forms. One study suggests that most donors are far more interested in acknowledgment and information, than in public recognition.

And when it comes to acknowledging a gift, one powerful technique is to have the thank you come from other volunteers, as well as from the university leadership.



How do we get
there from
here?

Well, I've given you lots of advice on what you need to do to strengthen your advancement program.

I am very mindful, however, that none of this is easy and none of this is quick.

It requires a concerted and sustained effort.

We will need
Institutional
support



And if the effort is to be concerted and sustained, you will need institutional support.

From a number of surveys of CASE members, we have found that the greatest barrier to success for the advancement office is lack of understanding and support for our work within the institution.

That understanding and support needs to begin at the top, with the institutional leadership.

To gain that support, I take you back to where we began. By linking the goals of the advancement office to the goals of the institution as a whole, you demonstrate to the leadership the enormous value you bring to the table.

We can help secure a
bright future for our
institutions



At the end of the day, the advancement operations can play a central role in ensuring a bright future for your institutions.

In fact, to paraphrase a very wise university president, an institution without a strong advancement program can be good but it can never be great.



And for that reason, I believe this is absolutely the best time to be in our field.

The demand for our work has never been greater.

The respect for our work has never been higher.

The nature of our work has never been more strategic.

And the actual conduct of our work has never been more exciting.

I wish you well as you pursue this noble profession. And I leave you with this last thought: a chancellor I once worked for used to say – facetiously – that once you give up your integrity the rest is easy. I just want to say, once you give up your integrity, the rest is just a paycheck. Thank you.