VOLUNTARY SUPPORT OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: A GLOBAL SNAPSHOT
### CONTENTS

Introduction ................................................................. 3
Comparing Data Across Nations ........................................ 4
Sources of Contributions to Higher Education Institutions .......... 4
Purposes of Contributions to Higher Education Institutions ........... 5
Growth in Charitable Giving to Higher Education Institutions .......... 7

© 2019 Council for Advancement and Support of Education
Original publication date: JULY 2019

All rights reserved. No part of the material in this document may be reproduced or used in any form, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, posting or distributing, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the written consent of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer: While the publisher has used its best efforts in preparing this document, it makes no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this paper. No liability or responsibility of any kind (to extent permitted by law), including responsibility for negligence is accepted by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, its servants or agents. All information gathered is believed correct at publication date. Neither the publisher nor the author is engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

### ABOUT CASE

CASE believes in advancing education to transform lives and society. As a global nonprofit membership association of educational institutions, CASE helps develop the communities of professional practice that build institutional resilience and success in challenging times. The communities include staff engaged in alumni relations, fundraising, marketing, student recruitment, stakeholder engagement, crisis communications and government relations. CASE is volunteer-led and uses the intellectual capital of senior practitioners to build capacity and capability across the world.

CASE has offices in Washington, D.C., London, Singapore and Mexico City. Member institutions include more than 3,700 colleges and universities, primary and secondary independent and international schools, and nonprofit organizations in 82 countries. CASE serves nearly 91,000 practitioners. For more information about CASE, please visit [www.case.org](http://www.case.org).

![AmAtlas](https://case.org/amatlas)
Introduction

For decades, CASE has collected information on philanthropic support to higher education from its member institutions across the world. This includes institutions in Australia and New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the United States. In 2016, CASE also surveyed a cohort of European nations outside the United Kingdom—Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.

The breadth of this research uniquely positions CASE to be the global source of metrics on educational fundraising outcomes. For the first time, CASE is capitalizing on that expansiveness by examining data across these five surveys and presenting notable findings in this research brief.

As the world’s economies become more inter-connected and as institutions host more international students and build campuses in other countries, the capacity to observe global patterns of philanthropy becomes increasingly useful and, indeed, necessary. In addition, institutions will find they have peer and aspirant institutions beyond their own national borders. Sometimes, the institution or institutions that provide the most compelling data may be across the globe.

This brief reports on philanthropic income to higher education. Canadian data represent funds secured. Data for all other countries do not include pledges—only cash or property received in the years studied.

• Findings are first presented by source for Australia and New Zealand (2018), the United Kingdom and Ireland (2018), and the United States (2018).

• Data are then presented on gifts to higher education institutions by purpose for Australia and New Zealand (2018); Canada (2018); Europe, excluding the United Kingdom (2016); and the United States (2018).

• The next section presents longitudinal trends for overall philanthropic giving to higher education in Australia and New Zealand (2013–2018), the United Kingdom and Ireland (2004–2018), and the United States (2004–2018).

In tables and figures in this report, percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
Comparing Data Across Nations

When comparing fundraising outcomes across countries, it is important to keep a few things in mind. While philanthropy is a universal human practice, it is expressed differently in each country, and it varies among historical periods in each nation. The tax treatment of gifts and the state of the economy also vary among nations.

Moreover, definitions and survey methodology vary. For example, in the United States, the CASE survey instrument, called the Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) survey, counts hard—or legal—credit only. In CASE surveys in most other countries, the person who caused the gift to be made, while he or she may not receive legal credit, is counted as the source of the gift. Therefore, in the United States, alumni and nonalumni individual giving is lower than it would be if such soft-credit contributions were counted.

The sample size in each nation or group of nations also differs, which affects the apparent volatility of the data. The larger the sample, the smoother the historical trends.

However, it is clear from all the data that year-over-year results rise and fall, but generally philanthropic support to higher education institutions rises.

Although many factors influence the level and timing of gifts, this steady upward trend is often a reflection of an institution’s efficacy in stewarding and engaging its constituencies. This underscores the significant role that relationships play between educational institutions and the donors who support them.

Sources of Contributions to Higher Education Institutions

Institutions in the United States and the United Kingdom and Ireland reported similar distributions of sources of charitable contributions. As mentioned earlier, data for the United States only reflect legal credit, and therefore, philanthropic income from alumni and nonalumni individuals appears lower than it would if soft credits were included. Thus, the distribution of sources of gifts is even closer among the two geographic groups of institutions than it appears in the charts.

Philanthropic giving to institutions in Australia and New Zealand came mostly from foundations and New Zealand came mostly from foundations and nonalumni individuals.

Voluntary Support of Higher Education Institutions by Source, 2018
**Purposes of Contributions to Higher Education Institutions**

In Australia and New Zealand, virtually all gifts are restricted to a current use rather than to infrastructure or capital projects. Research is the primary area receiving philanthropic funding, followed by contributions for financial aid.

In Canada, research and student financial aid each receive about a quarter of all contributions. So, together these purposes make up half the contributed dollars. Canadian institutions report on new funds secured, rather than cash received.

---

In tables and figures in this report, percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
A 2016 study of European nations (not including the United Kingdom) revealed that most contributions are restricted to research. Capital projects are the second-most-funded purpose in those nations.

In the United States, most gifts are restricted by donors to either specific current operations purposes or restricted endowments. Current uses include research, departments within the institutions, student financial aid, and other purposes. Endowments may be restricted to the same categories as current uses, but the funds are held in an endowment, the income from which funds the donor’s selected purpose.
**Growth in Charitable Giving to Higher Education Institutions**

In three of the five regions covered in this brief, there are enough longitudinal data to illustrate patterns of giving over time. For the United Kingdom and Ireland and the United States, 15 years of data are shown. The survey for Australia and New Zealand started in 2013; six years of data are shown for that survey.

The following charts show two trend lines. The green trend line shows the percentage change from the previous year. The blue trend line shows growth based on an indexed value of 100 for the first year for each region. The two trends are calculated using averages for each survey year, except in the United States, where the data represent an estimate of all institutions in the nation.

Note that a dip in the green trend line is usually caused by a lower rate of growth, not a decrease in philanthropic income. Only when the green line dips below zero does it represent a decrease in philanthropic contributions. Percentage changes in annual contribution levels are calibrated on the right-hand vertical axes.

More significant than annual changes in giving is the overall pattern of growth, illustrated in blue. In the charts that follow, the first year in the series for a region is set at 100 and is indicated on the left-hand vertical axes. Changes over time are shown relative to that initial level.

In a given year, contributions may rise or fall due to the state of the national economy, stock market activity or the timing of a major gift.

Individuals and organizations both regulate the timing and level of giving according to their specific circumstances, as well as, to national economic circumstances. A household or an institution will experience changes in income, assets, or both because of events unique to them and outside the control of a post secondary institution. These may be due to personal circumstances, such as retirement or marriage. Changes also may be due to national events, such as a change in gross domestic product or stock prices.

Tax law can influence the timing and level of gifts, too. A recent example of this can be seen in the United States, which passed a new tax law, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, which went into effect in January 2018. Since then, some institutions reported that a cohort of donors adopted a strategy of grouping gifts into five-year bundles to periodically enable them to itemize their deductions under the new tax regime. This may lead such donors to make larger-than-usual gifts every five years and no gifts in the other four.

What will not change in that five-year period, and what does not change in any of the countries reporting, is the relationship between donors and institutions. Those relationships are continuous,

---

**Giving to Higher Education Institutions, Australia and New Zealand, 2013–2018**

![Chart showing growth in charitable giving to higher education institutions in Australia and New Zealand from 2013 to 2018.](chart)

- **Index**
- **% Change from Previous Year**

n=26

---

In tables and figures in this report, percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.
and they matter in any economic, legal or cultural climate. Indeed, they are the reason the blue lines, showing the change in giving from a single historical point, climb steadily upward. The pace of that increase may be higher or lower in some countries than in others, depending upon the maturity of institutional advancement practices in those countries, but the overarching trend is upward.

Giving to Higher Education Institutions, United Kingdom and Ireland, 2004–2018

Giving to Higher Education Institutions, United States, 2004–2018

CONTACT

For more information on any study, please contact the indicated staff person.

Yashraj Jain, yjain@case.org: Ross-CASE Survey of Philanthropic Giving (United Kingdom and Ireland); Charitable Giving to Universities in Australia and New Zealand; CASE Europe Fundraising Survey (Europe excluding the United Kingdom)

Ann E. Kaplan, akaplan@case.org: CASE Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) Survey (United States)

Sancho Sequeira, ssequeira@case.org: CASE-CCAE Survey of Charitable Giving to Canadian Higher Education (Canada)