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# Editorial: Library Development: Every Employee's Job

Gloriana St. Clair

*Carnegie Mellon University*, [gstclair@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:gstclair@andrew.cmu.edu)

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## Editorial: Library Development: Every Employee's Job

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**I**n "The Changing Role of the Library Director: Fund-Raising and the Academic Library" in this issue, Susan K. Martin does exemplary work in defining the responsibilities of a Library Director in gaining additional support for the library. As that article went through the refereeing and revision processes, I decided to write a complementary editorial to reinforce the importance of development initiatives in libraries. The points I want to emphasize are, first, making the case and identifying and cultivating prospects and, second, broad involvement among libraries' faculty and staff. This article and editorial discuss how successful development efforts can allow the library to do more with more in an environment where few additional college and university resources are forthcoming.

### MAKING THE CASE:

#### IDENTIFYING AND CULTIVATING PROSPECTS

In development, making the case means articulating what the needs of the unit are and how private support can meet those needs and improve educational conditions for students and faculty. Potential donors must be able to visualize how their gift could benefit students, because for the most part they relate to the college or university through their student experience. Making the case and identifying and cultivating prospects are made more difficult by the fact that few schools offer an undergraduate library degree. For donors without library degrees, giving to the library might be a second choice after giving to the home college.

Several opportunities are available to alleviate this apparent disadvantage:

- As colleges and universities adopt a strategy of campaigns every 10 to 15 years, donors will be making more than one gift. Because the library serves students across all disciplines, it can be the site of a second, potentially more generous gift.
- Most donors will have made a first gift to support their favorite memory of their campus experience. The institution has a greater opportunity to guide them in their selec-

tion of a second gift. Donors will often ask "what does the university need most?"

- Because the library serves all colleges, strong relationships must be built with them. Major gift proposals that provide for an endowed professorship and an endowed librarian position should be constructed, and strong attempts should be made to seek funding to support the library needs of endowed subject chairs. Often having sufficient library resources will be a key to recruiting top talent for the chair.
- Some alumni will be from programs that are no longer taught at the institution or that have moved from one college to another. These individuals often select the library as the object of their philanthropy.
- Faculty who have used the library regularly to support their research and teaching see it as an appropriate repository for their accumulated collections, their annual support, memorial gifts, and estate gifts. The library's ability to make good use of smaller endowments and memorial gifts to buy books and to recognize the donors through gift plates are advantages that most colleges do not have.
- An emerging group of potential supporters are individuals who are heavy electronic information users, such as financial entrepreneurs and many attorneys. These individuals think the library will be all electronic; they are interested in making that vision real sooner.
- Couples who graduated from different colleges find it rewarding to be able to focus their philanthropy on a single program. The library's record of service to all disciplines attracts their loyalty. That meeting between Suzanne Pohland and Joseph Paterno in Penn State's Pattee Library has resulted in an eight million dollar Paterno Library endowment, a 32 million dollar Paterno Library construction project, and numerous other significant gifts just emerging from a campaign still in its silent phase.
- Friends of people who already give to the library are susceptible to recruitment, especially if the library does a good job with its donor recognition program. This networking

can be an enormously powerful tool in building a stronger level of annual giving and from that a more robust major gifts program.

- Heavy library users are as loyal to the libraries as they are to their Colleges. Individuals who had a favorite carrel or section where they studied, who knew staff and librarians, and who frequented the current periodicals area, are excellent prospects. Similarly, many students who worked in the library to make it through their degree program remember that experience with fondness and ask about their former supervisors.
- People who love books and reading see the library as an appropriate philanthropic goal.

The diversity of the list above offers a major communications challenge. As case statements are written and brochures developed, their applicability to all of these audiences must be tested. Donors who are in a position to make substantial gifts to the institution are leaders in business and industry. Their expectations are high.

### **BROAD INVOLVEMENT OF LIBRARY EMPLOYEES**

Many colleges and universities involved in campaigns retain consultants to assist them in creating their appeal and assessing the strength of support for a campaign. These consultants are also available to the institution to teach development officers and their deans and directors how to be more effective in raising private funds. In this role, John Glier of Grenzsbach, Glier and Associates advised administrators that the institution needs to have a strength of relationship amounting to a monthly contact for five years in order to be in a position to ask for a million dollar gift. Such contacts would include visits, telephone calls, trips to campus, newsletters, videocassettes, personal letters, and so forth. My editorial, "Coaching Higher Education to Change," was grist for this contact mill, and I would expect this editorial and Martin's article to serve also. These contacts fall into many categories—some of them are targeted towards soliciting a first gift and some towards thanking the donor for an existing gift.

Because subsequent gifts may follow a first one, that process of continuing to engage the donor in the benefits of gifts sets the stage. Proposals, which are written to explain how a major gift will benefit the institution, often contain a section discussing how the impact and effectiveness of the gift will be recognized. Continuing to impress on donors the difference that their gift is making to the lives of students is crucial for a successful development enterprise.

Collections officers and special collections heads already understand that development work is a part of their responsibility. Their contacts with donors are the source of a great many positive significant relationships. The rest of the library is much more skeptical. Yet, as the Penn State libraries worked through the campaign for the Paterno library, the fact that 97% of all libraries employees gave to the campaign became an important selling point with other donors. That high level of support from the individuals actually doing the work convinced donors that the cause was extremely worthwhile. The internal faculty-staff committee which handled that campaign and the one that will work to support the new campaign did an exemplary job.

Many others here have gotten involved and are making a difference with donors:

- The physical sciences librarian sends a monthly letter about use of physics and chemistry materials to two donors who have given resources to support those specific programs.
- The heads of acquisitions and cataloging visit with donors giving collections, manage a gift book process, help in writing proposals, and interact regular with other donors in various venues.
- The Preservation librarian has a strong relationship with the donor whose gift began her program, keeps an ongoing list of well-described gifts needed, and appears before the Board to demonstrate techniques. Preservation, both physical and electronic, is a case that donors understand and respond to; the idea of saving a sick book appeals.
- The Archivist, the Sports Archivist, and the Historical Collections and Labor Archivist are extremely effective both with donors of collections and with those who might provide financial support for them. Donors resonate with pictures and memorabilia contained in these areas.
- Many subject and campus librarians and staff thank donors personally, write them letters, contribute to proposals being put together, hold recognition events, and generally make a first contact with a variety of potential friends.
- Staff working on circulation and other desks, supervisors interacting with student employees, and all employees interacting through their other involvements in the community have a powerful venue for conveying the importance of the library in making student life better and more productive. Donors who come in contact with library employees are uniformly impressed with the enthusiasm those employees have for their work and with their dedication to the students. Librarians and library staff are wonderful good will ambassadors.

The need for additional resources to support the library's existence in a combined print and electronic environment is enormous. Institutional budgets seem unlikely to grow at levels that will provide that support. One way in which the library can begin to do more with more is to have an active and successful development program. Creating such a program requires the assistance of library employees. If 97% of employees support development efforts with their personal contributions and with their time, talent, and enthusiasm, the result will be magnificent improvements for all who come to the library to learn.—**GST.C.**

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