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ABSTRACT

Since most private and public sources of external funding generally expect increased effort and accountability, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) at two-year colleges must inform faculty and staff that if they do not expend extra effort their college will not receive significant grants. The CEO must also work with the college's professional development officer to evaluate funding proposals based on the population served by the funding source, which college programs are successful, institutional needs, and the college's goals and mission. The CEO and development officer must view the institution as a competitive product to be sold to external funding sources. Generally, two-year colleges have the best chance of receiving grants if a large number of their students are from underrepresented groups, their service areas are economically depressed, and some of their programs receive state or national recognition. It is important that CEOs set realistic expectations and communicate those expectations to the resource development staff. Finally, suggestions for CEOs to improve resource development include the following: (1) have resource development officers report directly to them; (2) allow officers to be involved in institutional planning; (3) give officers academic administrative rank; (4) communicate how much time should be spent on private sector fundraising versus proposal writing to government agencies; and (5) be sensitive to the development officer's needs for time to think and write. (HAA)

Maximizing Your Grant Development: A Guide for CEOs

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NETWORK OF CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATIONS

FOUNDATION DEVELOPMENT Abstracts

MAXIMIZING YOUR GRANT DEVELOPMENT: A GUIDE FOR CEOs

Thomas Snyder

If college presidents were to take a lie detector test, they might admit their real hope is that their resource development officers will raise external resources to do exactly what the institution is currently doing with no increased effort or accountability required. In other words, they expect their development professionals to become the institutions' Santa Clauses.

But, there is that raw reality, and CEOs are aware of it... most private and public funding sources want something in exchange for their money. Thus, the CEO must inform everyone: If the institution's staff and faculty aren't ready to expend extra effort, then the college will not receive significant external dollars. Without being too negative, the CEO should describe the environment in which community colleges must compete for external funds.

Nationally, there are over 1,500 two-year institutions making development efforts. The recently re-authorized Federal Higher Education amendments include few, if any, programs that require a percentage of funds to be set aside for competition among only two-year institutions. Thus, at the federal level, your college must potentially compete against all of the nation's community colleges, as well as thousands of four-year colleges and universities, and not-for-profit and for-profit organizations.

While everyone understands that not every institution submits an application for each available grant program, the number of grant applications submitted each year at the federal level has increased dramatically. Foundations report they are being deluged with proposals, most of which, unlike in the past, do meet their funding criteria.

Therefore, with support from the CEO the professional development officer must:

- Carefully analyze the funding source to determine who it is currently serving and who it can potentially serve.
- Determine which of the institution's programs have been most successful.
- Decide what the emerging needs of the institution's service area are.
- Review what the institution sees as its stated mission and goals. Such an analysis will provide you and the development officer with vital information for an institutional marketing analysis.

The CEO and the development officer must view the institution as a competitive product to be sold to external funding agencies and even to individual donors. To many in the academic community, this may sound crass but it is today's reality. The colleges you're competing with, like Harvard, Berkeley, and Stanford, use their reputations and the images of their institutions to attract millions of dollars in external funds each year.

Using this analysis, the CEO and development officer should identify the program and funding sources which might have the greatest interest in funding projects at your community college. Experience indicates that two-year colleges have the best chance of receiving grants if: (1) a large number of their students are from underrepresented groups, (2) their service areas are economically depressed, or (3) some of their institutional programs regularly receive state or national recognition. Should your college meet all of these criteria, BINGO, then perhaps your development officer deserves the title of Santa Claus.

CEOs should clearly communicate their expectations for the resource development staff at least once a semester, but those expectations must be realistic.

So, what are some realistic expectations?

- Anticipate it will take five submissions before a proposal concept is fully funded. A college can submit the same concept over five years to one agency or it can submit the same concept to five difference agencies in one year. In other words, the resource development officer should hit one of five. That's a .200 batting average. Good, particularly if they have other duties.
- Does the CEO look at the resource development office as an investment? What is expected as a return on that investment? The staff's highest investment is time and they need to maximize their use of time. Development officers refer to this concept as working hard or working smart.

A CEO should ask how much time it will take the development staff to generate a $50,000 grant from a local foundation or individual donor vs. preparing an application for that same amount or more from a federal or state agency.

Many CEOs are gamblers and are willing to commit their development officers to "the big ones." This includes the five-year, $2.5 million Title III proposals, the four-year programs funded by TRIO, or the $300,000 grants program the National Science Foundation has now opened to community colleges.

Obviously, if the development staff is writing huge, 200-page proposals, they can't be expected to reach the professional norm. American playwrights and authors are frequently asked how many pages they expect to write per day. They usually answer, "four to five page, and that's on a good day."

Professionals in the development field have come to this consensus:

A full-time proposal developer, with no other responsibilities, and a secretary, should be able to generate an average of one application per month. CEOs should expect that a proposal writer, with only proposal writing and no other duties, will obtain funding from one of every four applications submitted.

CEO's need to make sure they provide a goal in dollar amounts in their yearly expectations of the resource development staff. Otherwise, development officers may generate funds from four of the twenty applications submitted but those grants may product only $40,000.

The following are a few tips to CEOs for increased production by your college's resource development staffs.

- Make sure the resource development officer reports directly to you.
- Help foster a climate of reasonable expectations for the resource development office within your institution and with your volunteers.
- Allow the resource development officer to be involved in, if not in charge of, institutional planning.
- Designate the resource development officer as your official negotiator with funding agencies and individuals representing donors.
- Giver the resource development officer academic administrative rank, regardless of title.
- Provide the resource development office with the best equipment, adequate travel funds, and resource funds, but limit the full-time staff.
- Discuss with Foundation board members the percentage of time you, the CEO, are willing to give to fund raising and how many hours each business week the volunteers can expect you to be available.
- Inform volunteers and college staff of the amount of time you expect the resource development office to spend on private sector fund raising and "friend raising" vs. proposal writing to government agencies.
- Clearly define to all college staff members and volunteers serving these organizations, the relationship of contract education and program fund raising such as athletics, performing arts, museums, etc., to functions of the resource development office.

If CEOs do only three things, they should be these:

- Clearly communicate realistic expectations of the resource development office to the college staff and volunteers.
- Be sensitive to the development officer's need for time to think and write without interruption.
- Make sure the development office staff has institution-wide support and the CEO's support for what they are doing. Together, they will generate many external dollars.

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