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# Profiles and Giving Patterns of Donors to an Urban Southeastern Community College

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Profiles and Giving Patterns of Donors to an  
Urban Southeastern Community College

Profiles and Giving Patterns of Donors to an  
Urban Southeastern Community College

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Higher Education

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation focuses on fundraising in higher education, and specifically community college fundraising. Having transitioned from a traditional four year university setting to a community college, the author found this research helpful, not only for this institution, but for knowledge of community college donors and why they give. By working with data from this institution over the last ten years, and the research on the topic of fundraising for community colleges, donor trends were developed and needed improvements identified to raise significantly more dollars for the college. It is the outcome of this research that will hopefully assist this institution with its fundraising success, as well as assist community college fundraisers across the country.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Special thanks to the faculty, specifically the program chair Dr. Michael Miller, at the University of Arkansas for their support in completing this degree. I also thank the administrators and college presidents with whom I learned a great deal in my 16 years in higher education administration. Finally, I thank all those professors and teachers in my life that guided me from a family with zero college history and no concept of higher education, to my earning a doctorate degree. Thank you.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, friends and everyone that offered support, encouragement, stern advice, couches upon which to crash, and examples to follow in completing this degree. It is my sincere hope to be a lifelong advocate of education to those that think they may not be able to achieve their dreams.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Private support for community colleges has become increasingly important to their survival, primarily due to changes in public funding for higher education. Although enrollment in community colleges has increased, federal and state government allocations to community colleges have been stagnant or have decreased, often due to heightened competition for public money. This competition for public resources has been most visible as higher education has been forced to compete with health care and correctional programs, both of which have grown significantly over the past two decades. This trend has prompted community college presidents, along with all higher education leaders, to begin relying more heavily on alternative sources of funds to maintain and build programs and meet the basic needs of the institution (Katsinas, 2005).

Fundraising for higher education has been a normal part of the academy since the establishment of colleges and universities in North America (Miller, 1993). The use and reliance of funding for public higher education has come full circle, as early American colleges were entirely dependent upon private philanthropy, but surges in public funding, particularly in the post-World War II environment, allowed higher education to become less driven by financial donors. The post-Vietnam era enrollment increases in higher education prompted colleges and universities to begin looking for alternative revenue to off-set increased institutional demands, and ultimately, by the late-1970s and early-1980s, public funding of higher education was not able to adequately support institutional needs. By the mid-1980s, most public higher education institutions had become somewhat dependent upon fundraising as a primary element of institutional support (Miller, Newman, & Seagren, 1995).

Community colleges entered the competition for fundraising at a somewhat later period of time, as their local funding through mills allowed for them to be less dependent upon the

variations in state funding available (Miller & Holt, 2005). As many states shifted to state-level allocations of funding from local funding bases, the competition for funding was heightened, and by the 1990s, community colleges had fully entered the environment of fundraising. By the turn of the century, while community colleges had fully entered the activity of fundraising, they had to overcome a long history of poor donor cultivation, stewardship, and institutional development infrastructure (Ryan & Palmer, 2005).

With the shift in involvement in fundraising for community colleges, additional resources have been identified as fundamental to success. Such financial commitments included hiring professional fundraising staff; committing the time from college leaders and board members; and the resources necessary to support donor cultivations such as thank you letters; donor recognition gifts; transportation to meet with donors and foundations; information systems to record interactions; consultants to assist with planned giving; etc. In an institutional environment that has historically focused on limited administrative infrastructure, the change to support fundraising has been significant.

The current study will address two distinct problems relative to a community college that has spent the past decade initiating a fundraising program. The community college in this case study has lacked the resources to meet the demands for innovative programming and fundraising support, and the college has had to rely almost exclusively on a small staff and their ability to build personal relationships and solicit gifts, in addition to their creative energy in building donor recognition programs and a scaffolding approach to developing gift generations.

The second problem the study addressed is the efficiency of the development operation at the case study community college. With a small database, narrow base of donors, and little focus on alumni, there is a defined need to explore how efficient and effective different approaches are to the fundraising process. As the case study community college is relatively new to the activity

of fundraising, by diagnosing the effectiveness and efficiency of fundraising activities now, the institution can be more focused in how scarce resources are allocated to the fundraising process.

By addressing these two problems, the study was well positioned in assisting the case study institution and other community colleges like it in using fundraising as a tool for institutional development. Additionally, the study attempted to provide validation to the long-held notion of a theory of fundraising reliant on gift growth over time in companionship with volunteer investment.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose for conducting the study was to understand how donors at Seminole State College support their institution and how that financial support is structured both over time and gift size. Making use of institutional warehoused data, donors and giving histories were tracked and linked with solicitation methods to determine the most effective and efficient approaches to fundraising at the college.

### **Research Questions**

1. What was the profile of the contemporary donor at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college?
  - a. What was the demographic profile of donors over the past five years?
  - b. What was the institutional affiliation of donors over the past five years?
  - c. Were there observable differences in the institution's donor profile pre-2008 (2003-2007) and 2008-2012?
2. What was the profile of contemporary major donors at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college, during the past five years?
3. Since fiscal year 2008, what were the giving patterns of major donors at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college?

4. Studying the annual consistent individual donor over the past five years at Seminole State College:
  - a. What was the profile of consistent donors?
  - b. Were there differences in donors that display decreases in giving, donors who give consistently, and donors that increase their giving?
  - c. Was there a correlation between increased donors and institutional affiliation with the college?

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

1. The study was limited to one urban community college in the Southeastern United States, Seminole State College. Therefore, findings from the study should be generalized, with caution, to both other rural-urban classified institutions and those in other geographic regions of the United States.
2. The study was limited in how donor definitions were operationalized, as the terms were unique to the case study institution. Therefore, study findings should be interpreted with these operational definitions in mind and should similarly be generalized with caution.
3. The study was limited by the integrity of the institutionally-supported database that was utilized for data collection. Interpreting the findings of this study should take into consideration this question of integrity and the possible limitation of types of data that have been historically stored by the institution.
4. The study was limited in that special fundraising campaign use was not differentiated in the data analysis, although these campaigns will be noted, where applicable, in the study findings. Institutions and programs, however, that rely on special event fundraising should be cautious in applying these findings to their situations.

5. The study was limited to a certain period of time, making use of three- and five-year periods of time. This time limitation will not attempt to control for inflation or the fiscal state of the economy of the nation or state.

### **Assumptions**

1. The study accepted the assumption that individuals give for a variety of reasons, and the development professional working with these donors can benefit from better understanding giving patterns and tendencies.
2. The study accepted the assumption that fundraising for a community college has unique elements and attributes that differentiate their activities from four-year college fundraising.
3. The study accepted the assumption that the case study community college has a valid, reliable, and accurate data system for donors.
4. The study accepted the assumption that fundraising procedures and donor patterns change over time, but most likely varied little during the five-year time span that the study covers.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Donor:** An individual or organization that provides quantifiable support within a fiscal year, in this case, to the case study institution. The support is typically measured in a financial contribution, but can also include in-kind contributions of property or services that can be assigned a dollar value.

**Lapsed Donor:** An individual or organization that provided quantifiable support in past fiscal years but failed to do so in the most recent fiscal year recorded.

**Major Donor:** Individual or organization that has made a gift or committed \$10,000 or more to the case study college. The phrase typically has a different interpretation at different

institutions, as the historical pace, pattern, and quantity of giving serves as the guide for establishing who qualifies to be called a major donor.

**Consistent Donor:** A donor that has been consistent in giving throughout the time included in the study. These individuals are classified as such regardless of whether their gifts were cash, in-kind, or a combination of both.

**Decreased Donor:** A donor who has shown a decrease in financial giving to the case study institution during the time included in the research. The classification will be based on the overall beginning and ending giving pattern.

**Increased Donor:** A donor who has shown an increase in financial giving to the case study institution during the time included in the research. The classification will be based on the overall beginning and ending giving pattern.

### **Significance of the Study**

Community college fundraising is simultaneously critical and emerging for community colleges; as these colleges attempt to figure out how to raise money, they are concurrently reliant on their work to provide the much needed resources for institutions to operate (Brumbach & Villadsen, 2002). Presidents and trustees are also looking at how they are responsible for fundraising, and donors are becoming increasingly aware of their giving options and how their resources can maximize their intentions; additionally, donors increasingly understand their power to influence an institution's decision making through their gifts (Wenrich & Reid, 2003). Future researchers, as well as professional administrators in community colleges, will find this research and the study findings of both practical and intellectual value.

Community college fundraisers will benefit from the study findings by developing a greater understanding of why financial contributions are made to community colleges, what types of individuals make these gifts, and what their profiles might look like. By establishing

data about who is giving to community colleges, and how the contributions are made and with what kind of regularity, they, along with college leaders, can be more effective and efficient in their fundraising practices. This understanding can also conceptually allow for a better comparison of the theoretical understanding of fundraising and establishes base comparisons between two- and four-year institutions, and depending on that comparison, better equip two-year colleges to use the systems and techniques of four-year colleges.

Presidents and trustees are evaluated by their abilities to rally a community around their college. Often, the rally is for support of a program or a capital need. Many community college presidents are appointed with little or no fundraising experience, and this makes the task of fundraising more difficult for professionals charged with raising support. In contrast, some college presidents are excellent fundraisers but have limited time to devote to the fundraising process. Regardless, the evaluation of presidents most often looks at their ability to bring in additional support to the institution. This makes the position of the fundraiser at the community college important to the president, and information on giving patterns, gift sizes, and the regularity of contributions can greatly impact the ability of both the professional fundraiser and the college president.

Individual corporations and foundations will also be interested in this study as they are becoming increasingly aware of their rights and abilities as donors. In addition, they view community colleges as an opportunity to have a greater educational impact with their gifts than with a traditional four-year institution. Business and industry relies directly on community colleges for job training and workforce development, and as these colleges are typically the low-cost labor preparation provider for most businesses, they have a vested interest in the success or failure of a college. Similarly, these businesses and industries have a vested interest in the

quality of programs at community colleges, and they are increasingly interested in how their gifts can be used to assure quality programing.

This study also has great heuristic value, as little scholarship has focused on giving patterns in higher education in general, and community colleges in specific. The study will provide strong baseline data on giving patterns and donors, and future researchers will be able to build upon this and extrapolate to larger populations and multiple case study settings.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Fundraising in higher education can be traced to the very earliest institutions in North America (Miller, 1993), and with several hundred years of practice, a common theory of fundraising has been developed around the concept of human investment in the institution. Commonly known as the donor-pyramid of giving, the theory has received minimal academic attention, but has tremendous practical use (Bila, 1999).

The donor-pyramid includes three intersecting pyramid's, one philosophical, one operational, and one psychological. Each begins with a broad foundational level, and for the philosophical, the pyramid describes the 'philosophy' of how gifts are used. In the Bila version of the model, the steps of the pyramid are "source of current funds, living endowment, and touchstone of institutional quality" (p. 167). The operational pyramid is more technical and is directly addressed in the current study. The operational pyramid describes how gifts should be cultivated, and include "a gift defining a base, regular gifts, larger gifts, leadership gifts, and major and deferred gifts" (p. 167). The third pyramid describes the psychology of how individuals go about getting involved with the process of giving. Bila described the first steps as "entry level volunteers; tasks, sense of affiliation" (p. 167), followed by "experienced volunteers, ownership, and achievement," (p. 167), and finally, "sense of power, institutional ideals, key volunteers" (p. 167). Combined, the theory holds that individuals make initial gifts and engage

in a system of cultivation and giving by taking on small tasks and getting involved in very modest ways. Concurrently, their initial gifts go to unrestricted accounts, and these accounts typically are sources of current funds. As involvement grows, gifts become more regular and larger, and eventually, gift sizes are appropriate to create endowments and can influence the quality of the institution.

The use of this theory as a foundation for the current study is unique in at least two ways. First, the theory has not been directly applied to community colleges in any sort of academic sense before, and second, the study focuses primarily on the operational pyramid. Previous research has typically focused on the psychological pyramid, exploring how and why individuals choose to make financial gifts and be involved in an institution's advancement.

Depending upon the results of the study, the operational pyramid of giving may be reinforced and determined to be appropriate for application to community colleges, or conversely, might be determined to be inappropriate for community colleges. Regardless of the results of the study, the application of the theory to the study provides value to future scholars, as well as to the practitioner community of fundraisers.

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The focus of this study was to examine the motivations of giving by donors at Seminole State College, an urban community college in Florida, to help community college leaders better understand how to effectively develop fundraising programs. Literature for the study was identified using a variety of libraries and resources, and in particular, relied on the Mullins Library of the University of Arkansas. Traditional online indexing resources, including Ebsco, ProQuest, ERIC, etc., were used to identify relevant literature, as well as internet resources made available through professional societies such as the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, as well as private resources held by the researcher, the case study institution, and various faculty members. The literature included in this chapter was identified in the 2012-2013 academic year, and the chapter has been organized into the following sections: fundraising for higher education, financing community colleges, and reasons people give to higher education and community college fundraising. The chapter concludes with a summary.

### **Fundraising in Higher Education**

Fundraising has held a prominent place in American higher education from the earliest founding of Harvard University in the 1600's (Miller, 1993). Throughout 400 years of practice, research on higher education fundraising has varied significantly, from basic reports on foundation giving to in-depth analysis of the role of athletics in fundraising. Presented here, in chronological order, is a sampling of the research on fundraising in higher education since about 2000.

Rooney (1999) studied the methods used in analyzing costs and benefits of fundraising at universities, specifically investing funds raised from constituents and how money is used and reinvested in the fundraising process. Through his research, he formulated a new, possibly more effective method that incorporates timing of return and measuring the actual return on

investment as opposed to reported return. The industry standard for measuring the cost of fundraising had been developed by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO).

Abzug and Abzug (2003) contended that the professionalization of higher education fundraising has evolved over the last 350 years. Before there were fundraising professionals, there were volunteers in charge of fundraising. In their research, they pointed to four historical trends that have changed higher education fundraising in the United States. First, they noted that the substitution of professional appeals for non-profits such as churches, reflected a real competition within the non-profit sector. Second, the notion of charity, to give of an individual's resources to help others, has been replaced with the notion of philanthropy, which is uniquely distinctive from charity. Third, fundraising has become a central activity of all college presidents and trustees, and the result is both a more competitive environment, but also the emergence of a more efficient fundraising system. And fourth, fundraising for public institutions has become a common, and expected, activity.

Abzug and Abzug (2003) also noted the important role volunteers play in the success of college fundraising. They studied the effective roles of student volunteers, alumni volunteers, and volunteer boards, and they identified the promising practices used by these groups. From their survey results, they concluded that most organizations use volunteers, and although fundraising is becoming increasingly professionalized, volunteers, who sometimes behave in unpredictable ways, remain highly effective.

Although the United States has emerged as a pioneer, prototype, and worldwide champion for modern philanthropy, community colleges have only recently entered and begun to rely on the fundraising process (Babitz, 2003). The timing of this involvement in philanthropy comes as the U.S. transfers wealth between generations, and as the country comes to more

greatly appreciate the community college's ability to innovate and adapt. Babitz (2003) also commended community colleges for their openness to educational access and community education, and based on professional practice, reported key factors in community college fundraising.

Errett (2004) studied trends in community college fundraising in Texas, and significantly noted one of the predominant trends as the reliance on private foundation support as compared to individual support. The trend might have been driven by the lack of an alumni base that has the same type of investment as at four-year colleges, and that many foundations are tied into social justice programming that can be implemented in access institutions.

Ryan and Palmer (2005) contended that with the right leadership, all colleges have the capacity to secure private contributions. Success in securing contributions, they found, was dependent on the extent to which fundraising is viewed as a part of the institution's overall community relations effort, the ways that tasks are assigned and coordinated, and the strategies used to ensure returns on investment in fundraising campaigns. They emphasized personal leadership in the fundraising process and the importance of institutional trust in handling contributions.

Lenkowsky (2007) explored big philanthropy and gave some historic perspective on giving in America. Between 1975 and 2004, the number of grant making foundations in the United States rose from 22,000 to nearly 68,000. The frequency of large gifts has also grown; in 2006, over a dozen groups received gift pledges in excess of \$100 million. About two-thirds of all giving has come from the most affluent three percent of American households.

Grant (2009) found that private foundation expenses and reputation, board size, community wealth, suburban locale, and size were significant predictors of distributive equity. In addition, community colleges in wealthy communities and older, well-funded foundations led

by large boards have an advantage in fundraising. He suggested that historical success can predict future success.

Grover (2009), from a practical perspective, outlined specific campaign strategies for community colleges. The book was separated into three sections that aligned with distinct phases of a campaign: before the campaign, involving developing a case statement and being specific about fundraising targets; during the campaign, including stewarding donors effectively; and after the campaign, including being accountable and trustworthy with the contributions that have been made. Grover's arguments place tremendous importance on all three phases of a campaign, and stressed that although the total amount raised is highly important, all three phases must be given equal priority.

Caboni (2010) conducted a study to explore if a normative structure of college and university fundraising behaviors exists and if fundraising is indeed a profession. In this work, he uncovered that fundraising has indeed become a profession, with a mastery of knowledge, and ideal of service to a client, and professional self-regulation.

Chance and Norton (2010) studied the pro-social behavior of donors and the giving tendencies of donors who give when there is a match, seed money, or thank you gifts involved. Their study was designed to explore the unintended consequences of fundraising programs. They found that pro-social behavior can lead to happiness and further philanthropic giving, and that participating in charity tends to make people happier than when they use their money to buy things for themselves. When matching-gifts or seed money are in use, they found that contributions tended to increase, but only in the early stages of a fundraising campaign. They also found that the use of a thank you gift predicted that the donor would not contribute to future campaigns.

Holmes (2010) discussed the challenge of providing adequate money to support fundraising operations. Public higher education has grown to appreciate the support that fundraising provides the institution. Considered the third leg of the stool, fundraising helps meet the needs of a university along with tuition and fees and grants. Holmes quickly contends that three legs are unequal, but essential. As state appropriations decreases, the legs of the stool have changed in length, with more reliance on tuition and fundraising. Many institutionally-related foundations get support from the institution; increasing from 35% in 2006 to 52% in 2009. He looks further at various ways to fund foundations, including institutional support, unrestricted gifts, management fees from endowments, gift fees, temporary investment earnings, revenue from real estate, and other various sources. He explained the pros and cons of each funding mechanism.

Stinson and Howard (2010) shared information on donors who support both academics and athletics on college campuses. Although the donor gave a higher average gift and tended to be more loyal than a donor to academics, the total giving to athletics is smaller for a split donor. The authors looked at three NCAA Division I institutions to compare this data. Following, they performed a study of 65 donors to NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision schools who gave to both academics and athletics to determine their motivations and changes in giving.

The cost of fundraising activities is an important consideration for most non profits, and they are looking for ways to save money and reduce costs. One study looked at whether non-profits purged their lists of donors who are less profitable (or not giving) as a way to reduce costs (Bennett, 2011). In his findings, Bennett shared that less than half of the charities surveyed reduced the amount of materials sent to supporters and donors. One in eight non-profits used a systematic approach to reduce their lists.

Calabrese (2011) explored the issue of perception of non-profits with large amounts of accumulated assets and how that perception may affect contributions. The economic downturn in 2008 caused many to look at the non-profit sector and the large endowments that were in place, but their lack of monetary support for students at that time. Tuitions were going up and support was not there. The public did not understand the restrictions placed on gifts by donors hindered the actual support that can be provided. Many foundations, although with large net worth, may have limited unrestricted dollars to combat the fluctuations that may take place.

Drezner (2011) examined the literature related to philanthropy and fundraising in American higher education and provides a nine chapter look at what research is available on the topic. One chapter discussed in detail the influence of philanthropy on American Higher education, specifically individual gifts and how these gifts affect teaching, research and access to education. Another chapter explores the types of donors that are becoming philanthropic to higher education.

Johnson and Ellis (2011) examined the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for donating, and the messaging that can influence gifts. Through surveys to 14 university arts programs, they determined that messaging can influence how a donor perceives their gift. In addition, the benefits offered to a donor do play a role in their support of an organization.

Newman and Petrosko (2011) report results from a study that predicts the likelihood of alumni to join the alumni association. This study provides information on donor behavior of alumni of an institution that is helpful when targeting donors for solicitation. This study also provides information on what information to capture in development databases. The types of people that join alumni associations are the same that are targeted for solicitation, and the factors that determine donor success, can support the fundraising models at an institution. For example, alumni that received financial support to complete school (scholarships, etc.) are more likely to

join associations and be donors. These donors are called “repayers”. Many studies share predictors of giving by alumni, but little on why alumni join alumni associations.

Soyer and Hogarth (2011) performed a study on the size and distribution of donations when donors are given choices of recipients. Several experiments were conducted. The conclusions were that donors will increase their support if they can support multiple charitable organizations. In addition, the well-known non-profit organizations see an increase in support when given these options. In a second experiment allowing a donor to make contributions to only one charity, but providing options within that charity, donors increased their support with more options. This study supports a development program’s need to diversify its giving options.

A different study explored the differences between, and opportunities that arise from creating a “united fund” to receive support from donors for multiple causes. It looked at the interactions from the donors and results from soliciting sequentially, rather than simultaneously (Apinunmahakul & Barham, 2012).

The internet has also emerged as a force in fundraising. Martin Bog (Bog et al., 2012) conducted a study on internet fundraising campaigns and their effectiveness. Most fundraising campaigns on the internet are similar to traditional fundraising campaigns. The interactions and follow-up is important, and in the case of the internet, almost costless.

Weipking and Breeze (2012) suggested that the differences in attitudes towards money can explain difference in philanthropic behavior and that regardless of actual financial resources, the amount that people donate is negatively affected by the feelings of donor retention and personal inadequacy. Fundraising professionals need to understand that in addition to the background work done to identify potential donors and their capabilities, it is also important to understand how a donor feels about their. Are they secure enough to make a gift and at what

level? The economic downturn and political outlook have the nonprofit world concerned about this very topic.

### **Financing Community Colleges**

Perryman (1993) examined the perceptions of legislators in Colorado as they related to making funding decisions for higher education. His study showed that legislators had a favorable perception toward funding higher education, but there was disagreement and incongruence with the perceptions of college goals and priorities when considering how much to appropriate. His results indicated that legislators felt that tuition for community colleges should be lower than that of the 4-year universities in the state, allowing greater student access. Additionally, different funding models should exist for community colleges than universities to acknowledge how the two segments of higher education are different.

Property taxes may be one funding path that can assist community colleges. In her dissertation, Dreyer (1995) explored attitudes toward using property taxes to help support local community colleges. She identified and focused on three types of voter attitudes, including self-interest variables, non-self-interest variables, and voter attribute variables. Attitudes toward the community colleges were reflected in the non-self-interest variables, and all three factors had a positive correlation to sentiments about property taxes. Use and familiarity with the college, its leadership and control, and the community orientation of the college were all identified as factors that determine whether voters would support a tax increase for their local community college.

One researcher looked at the effects of what the state of Florida did in 1999 when it switched to a performance funding system for workforce education. According to Morris (2002), this change in funding represented a growing trend in higher education that has not been fully studied. For the current study, one community college was studied, and the case study led Morris to identify three scenarios for a reaction to this kind of funding: cutting costs to achieve

greater efficiency, limit services to serve more specific populations, or build institutional capacity to increase educational productivity, that is, grow enrollment and programs.

Some authors have found inconsistencies in reporting funding for community colleges, and these trends vary throughout the country. Underbakke (2002) for example, studied funding for community colleges in Iowa and found that public allocations have not kept pace with enrollment growth, and that the funding for community colleges has not kept pace with the rest of the country. He specifically reported a decrease in funding in both real dollars and in funding adjusted for inflation, concluding that additional reductions will be a common practice well into the future.

The state of Texas dealt with a similar situation as slowing state support, coupled with tightening economic strains, led to increases in tuition for Texas two-year schools to offset public support that was not increasing (Errett, 2004). In her dissertation research, Errett used the backdrop of the economic recession to look at the performance of community college foundations in support of institutions who struggled with balancing their budgets. The study looked at 51 two-year schools in Texas to understand the motivations, benefits, and rewards of financially supporting community colleges. Factors that were noted as important for greater success in supporting community colleges included the reputation of the college, allegiance to the college, and a company's or employee's involvement (such as company that hires the college's graduates).

Haley (2004) gave an example of how marketing and business students can turn class projects into fundraising for their institutions, helping financially troubled colleges achieve goals by utilizing resources in a unique way. By doing so, the institution is also creating goodwill while providing experience to its students, generating publicity for the charitable cause, and helping students understand that they are fortunate to participate in postsecondary education.

For many colleges, enrollment is important to the cash flow and overall revenue needed to operate colleges. For community colleges, the transition of students from two year degree programs to four-year schools is important to attract students so that they can transfer in a seamless fashion to work toward a bachelor's degree. Well articulated 2+2 programs, also called college articulation agreements, can help sustain enrollment and assist with budgeting, and ultimately can lead to greater financial stability (Butterfield, 2006).

Similar to the current study, Bakuzonis (2007) studied funding for associates degrees at community colleges in Florida. Bakuzonis studied total operating budgets, the performance based budget, the Full time Equivalent enrollment, the unduplicated headcount, and the individual community college perspective. The study compared institutions and showed those that had increases in total operating budget were those that responded most directly to the pre-determined measures of the legislated performance funding.

Jones (2007) looked at the state of Alabama to better understand the factors and barriers to philanthropic support for Alabama's community colleges. The qualitative study looked at the giving to community colleges as opposed to 4-year universities, and the decisions that led to such support. Additionally, the study helped identify why someone might be inclined to give to a community college, and why some people make these types of gifts.

Mullin and Honeyman (2007) offered a typology of 48 states and their funding for community colleges. Their study separated state funding for community colleges into three categories: no funding formula, responsive funding formula, and functional component funding, with the last two categories divided into subcategories (generalized and tiered). Under responsive funding, the authors explored the cost of education funding, equalized funding, and option funding. They concluded that funding formulas can be effective tools in de-emphasizing the often political aspects of funding higher education.

While looking at the resources available for fundraising, White (2007) looked at the community college/junior college system in Mississippi and their funding issues. He noted the alignments of the grants office with the fundraising office, with a trend emerging to look at cooperative funding as opposed to capital campaigns. White contended that community colleges have to perform similar functions as four-year universities to help fund the operations of the development office. And that although they have less infrastructure to support development activities, they mirror their 4-year counterparts in the responsibility of developing revenue to continue seeking additional revenue.

Another study that focused on how revenue is generated by community colleges focused on legislative opinions and their impact on funding decisions, specifically looking at case studies in Idaho and Oregon. Klimes (2008) found expectations of legislators about community college abilities to acquire alternative funding and the purposes for seeking alternative funding as key in making other determinations, conceptually arguing that those that are capable of helping themselves should be rewarded for creativity and energy. Building relationships and strategic partnering emerged as additional integral factors when making favorable funding decisions.

Mullen and Honeyman (2008) performed a study to help understand how each state governs and funds community colleges. They found that 40 states utilized a funding formula, 21 states had a higher education entity with governing control of the formula, and in 12 states the formula was embedded as a state statute. Five states had a “community college” entity, with distinct funding formulas for community colleges, and in two states, funding fell under a comprehensive (K-20) education entity.

Each state struggles with funding higher education in some unique ways, and the case of Florida is particularly acute. Boulard (2011) profiled the case of Florida, where in 2011, total cuts to state education were projected at \$4.6 billion. The primary cause for the reduction in

support was due to the declining real estate market in the state and subsequent impact on property tax; Florida is one of the hardest hit by the recession in terms of real estate value. The shortage in state budgets resulted in cuts to education, and specifically the state college system that included 28 community/state colleges. The 2% cut will mean approximately \$127 million less to Florida's state colleges, and they have turned somewhat to tuition increases, which has been the response at the 4-year institutions. Also, faculty and staff salaries have not increased causing institutions to not be able to recruit the highest caliber faculty and staff, and, many left the state for more secure and competitive salaries. Although student tuition in Florida is 62% of the national average, increasing tuition and fees was a realistic response, although it has hurt the access ability of many institutions. During the recession, state appropriations to higher education in Florida decreased by 19%, while the rest of the country averaged a decrease of only 3% (Boulard, 2011).

Funding has generally been a concern for community college leaders, whether due to their reliance on publicly allocated funds or their ability to generate their own revenue through tuition and contract training. The nonprofit Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reported that nearly half of all states have enacted or were considering major cuts to their higher education budgets in the short term. This prompted community college administrators to report their number one concern and priority as the financial state of their institutions and the need to minimize state funding reductions (Joch, 2011).

Some states are making drastic changes to their education systems with regard to funding. The state of Kentucky reorganized its community and technical colleges into the Kentucky Community and Technical College System in 1997 (Kreiger, 2011). Under the Postsecondary education Improvement Act of 1997, the 14 community colleges and 15 technical colleges were consolidated into 16, two-year comprehensive colleges, an effort that led to significant savings.

In South Carolina, a new governor wanted to initiate a new performance-based funding formula (McLeod, 2011). Under Governor Nikki Haley, the state's two- and four-year publicly funded institutions would be funded based on four performance indicators: graduation rates, percentage of instate students served, role in state economic development, and job placement of graduates. The institutions presidents added another indicator, enrollment of underrepresented populations. McLeod focused on the impact of this fifth indicator in his discussion of South Carolina.

Similar research identified consistent findings in North Carolina. Okpala (2011) described how the recent recession has caused deep cuts on funding to community colleges in the state. As in other states, the cuts have impacted the ability of the college to be first point of postsecondary access for the population, the quality of facilities and instruction, and the overall enrollment of the colleges. The decrease highlighted in North Carolina emphasized the need for community colleges to be able to raise their own funds through development activities.

### **Why People Give to Higher Education**

Prince and File (2001) authored one of the most commonly accepted and celebrated books on the motivation of individuals to support charitable causes. In *The Seven Faces of Philanthropy*, they highlighted the following donor types: Communitarian Donor (doing good makes sense); Devout Donor (doing good is God's will); Investor Donor (doing good is good business); Socialite Donor (doing good is fun); Altruist Donor (Doing good feels right); Repayer Donor (doing good in return); and Dynast Donor (Doing good is a family tradition).

Understanding the type of donor to an institution and personal motivations for giving is critical to the development officer's success, and this particularly calls for charitable organizations to understand the type of donor they are working with and what types of stewardship are most important for charitable giving success.

One of the main reasons people give to charity is the leadership that is in place. In her account as president of a college, McGee recounted her days as a fundraiser and how those experiences help her be a better college president (McGee, 2003). Ultimately, she reported that she believed that individuals related to her and her success was both relationship based and predicated on her ability to connect with potential donors. Also, she reported that her ability to convey a vision for the institution was instrumental in her effectiveness in fundraising.

The reliance on private support in community colleges has elevated the role and relationship of the leadership of the agency that holds and invests money raised for the college, typically some sort of foundation. When the foundation leadership knows almost as much about the college as the president, and knows as much or more about the community, the chances of the college securing the gifts through the foundation have been found to be enhanced. Successful fundraising, then, ties the foundation's leadership to the college's leadership to augment the overall development process (Wenrich & Reid, 2003). In addition to leadership, Errett (2004) reported, based on research in Texas, the characteristics that led to donors to community colleges were the reputation of the college, allegiance to the college, and employee involvement.

Irvin (2007) looked at the perceptions of endowments and how they may be viewed by some donors. Irvin cited several reasons why endowment may be viewed negatively by donors. Endowment funds are typically governed by specific laws that explain how funds can be used, which funds can be used, when, and how they are to be invested and managed. Some donors may feel that growing an endowment too big may hinder additional contributions, or, that relying on interest to a principal gift may not yield a significant enough return. Some donors may also feel that the dollars need to be put to good use now and for the cause it was intended, not saved

and secured for years to come. Others might find positive feelings, knowing that an endowment is an investment to continue honoring an individual's commitment.

Wright and Bocarnea (2007) studied alumni attitudes and behaviors toward making contributions to a nonprofit higher education institution. The authors used a data-driven model that examined the donor-public relationship, and alumni donor attitudes toward willingness to give unrestricted gifts. The results of the study concluded that donor organization-public relationships significantly predicted alumni donor attitudes toward willingness to contribute unrestricted funds, but did not predict frequency or size of gift.

Another important factor in why people give to higher education is that they have been identified as a potential donor to the institution. Nicoson (2010) explained how a prospect research system can help identify, qualify, and secure gifts from donors. Using a structure to qualify donors, Nicoson incorporated electronic screening, reviewing internal data, peer evaluations, and advanced prospect research to develop a prospect pool. Once in place, the author explained the assignment of prospects and the cultivation and solicitation for gifts.

Another possible reason for support is an affiliation with the school. If a person is an alumnus of an institution, that experience has been found to be a catalyst for supporting the institution with a financial gift (Newman & Petrosko, 2011). The authors contended that there are several factors as to whether an alumnus will support the school. For community college alumni, these factors include: their satisfaction with the college experience, existence of an active alumni association, knowing members of the alumni association, characteristics of graduates of the school, and if the college has maintained communication with them after they left the institution.

DelleVigna (2012) examined two types of motivations for giving to charities. With 90% of Americans giving money to some charity, a study was created to see why people like giving

and if social pressure plays a role. The results of the study showed that social pressure was indeed an important determinant in giving, and that the pressure can come from close personal friends, groups, and even family.

Another study looked at the differences in giving patterns for donors who give one time in a year versus multiple gifts within a year (Shen & Tsai, 2010). These single gift donors and multiple gift donors were examined to see if willingness to give changed donor behavior from single to multi gifts. The researchers looked at four years of data to determine the factors that determined willingness to give and concluded that different approaches are needed for single gift and multi gift donors.

### **Community College Fundraising**

Pastorella (2003) explained that community colleges are uniquely positioned to raise support from their alumni in that alumni from community colleges tend to value their degree in a very practical way. Most alumni live within the vicinity of the college and many had life altering experiences while on campus. Pastorella pointed out several steps to success when starting an alumni program at a community college, including: finding affluent, influential alumni; increasing the visibility of alumni on campus; developing a successful annual fund; achieving excellence; having realistic expectations; and having a clear mission.

Jones (2007) studied factors and barriers that influenced giving to Alabama community colleges. Jones focused on the changing need of community colleges to raise money, and noted the importance of leadership in fundraising. Jones also reported that effective strategies for raising money in community colleges can be developed from understanding donor types and why people choose to support a cause.

White (2007) explored resource development at Mississippi's community and junior colleges to see if revenue generated from fundraising served the colleges' needs. Additionally,

White looked at the types of resource development activities these institutions used to raise funds, as well as the internal integration and structure within the institution. White's findings showed that Mississippi operated the grants and fundraising offices in concert with each other. This is due to a trend uncovered, switching from a capital campaign approach to a cooperative funding approach with community based organizations. Regardless of that trend, the author explained that community colleges have to initiate annual fund drives, capital campaigns, special events, and business partnerships in order to secure additional resources.

Grant (2009) identified several reasons for greater support of public community colleges. Among them were foundation expenses and reputation, board size, community wealth, locale, and school size. He determined that colleges in wealthy communities, with older, well-funded foundations led by large boards have an advantage in fundraising.

Carter (2010) identified a donor focused fundraising model for community colleges. Using the logic model developed by Kellogg in 1998, Carter designed a fundraising program that encompassed the inputs (what is needed to accomplish the activity); activities (what needs to occur to address the problem); outputs (what will result from activities); outcomes (the changes that will occur as a result of the program); and impacts (the long lasting changes that will occur as a result of the program). In the model, Carter noted that no one single input or activity contributes to the outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Instead, all of the inputs and activities were necessary for the output outcomes and impacts to occur. Carter explained each area and provided examples of the items that make up each area for a fundraising program to be successful.

In her research centered at a multi-campus community college in Virginia, Carter (2011) attempted to understand the philanthropic motivations of community college donors. By looking at current, lapsed and major gift donors, the study looked at the impact of communications

pieces, the likelihood of financial support for multiple college projects and the donor philanthropic motivation profiles in making these gifts to a community college. The study provided an understanding of the types of donors that support community colleges, as well as the types of communications that will help drive support.

While community colleges educate nearly half of the undergraduates in America, they receive as little as 2% of the gifts to higher education. Klingaman (2012) used his experience as a fundraiser for various colleges to help identify the best approaches to raising support for community colleges. Topics covered by Klingaman included creating an institutional commitment to advancement, building a board that gives, and how to grow an annual fund with sustainable repeat gifts.

Heaton (2012) reported that many community colleges have seen success in major fundraising campaigns. In a recent study by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, more than half of the respondents were in various phases of campaigns at their institutions. Heaton attributed the success of these campaigns to strong leadership and volunteers, an evaluation of current resources, and clear vision.

### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter provided a brief overview of the literature related to funding higher education and community college specifically, and how and why colleges raise money and from whom. Consistent in the literature was the discussion that higher education institutions have a different need for fundraising than they have had in the past, and that this need is largely based on a desire to stabilize the financial state of the community college. In doing so, literature also consistently showed that fundraising is successful when it is purposeful and has the proper leadership in place.

### **III. RESEARCH METHODS**

Fundraising is an increasingly important activity for administrators in community colleges, and to be effective and efficient, they must learn to understand donor behaviors. By understanding donor behaviors, community college fundraising professionals can be more effective and can provide the revenue needed to adequately support their mission and efforts.

#### **Target Population and Sampling Procedures**

For this study, research will be performed on the donor giving history for the last five fiscal years at Seminole State College of Florida. The records used for this study are kept within the Foundation for Seminole State College and are maintained in a donor database system. The fiscal year for the college and foundation runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> of one year through June 30th of the next calendar year (i.e. July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008 is FY2008).

The study looked at consistent donor giving for each of the last five fiscal years (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012) and will determine how many donors made a gift in each of those years. Based on initial review of the data the total number of donors ranged, on average, between 400-700.

A donor is defined in this study as any person or entity that makes a charitable contribution during that fiscal year. If the foundation provides a value for that gift, it is considered a donation. For the purpose of this study, a married couple will be counted as one entity and the primary relationship to the college will be evaluated. Additionally, a donor that represents an organization will be treated as one giving record and not treated separately.

#### **Research Design**

This data collected in the donor database system is used to identify donors and keep track of their private support, as well as solicit additional support for the college. This data is also used for reports for the college, region and state. For this study, the ex-post-facto method will

be incorporated because the descriptive variables that exist or have already occurred are selected and observed (Best & Kahn, 1993).

### **Case Study Institution**

The institution used for this study, Seminole State College of Florida, is located in Central Florida, just north of Orlando, a major American city of over 2 million people and 28 different colleges and universities. The college is a part of a statewide college system and is currently the 8<sup>th</sup> largest in the system. The college consists of four campuses, all located within the county just north of the metropolitan city. The institution has an enrollment of approximately 32,000 students on the four campuses. The main campus stood alone until 2001 when a branch campus opened. Two more branches and two centers were later added.

The institution was founded in 1965 and opened their doors in 1966. In its history, the college has had only 2 presidents. The first president was in office for 30 years, and the second president is still in office (17 years). The college is nearing its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and is looking to complete a campaign to raise support for the college.

The college is an economic engine for the county and the region. It is the third largest employer in the county, and employs approximately 2000 faculty and staff. The college offers roughly 190 degrees and certificate programs including five new baccalaureate degrees, and currently ranks 20<sup>th</sup> in the nation for the number of AA degrees awarded.

The college is governed by a five-member board of trustees, each appointed by the governor of the state for a two-year term. The president of the college answers to the trustees, and oversees an administrative team to run the college. The current president has a background in fundraising and development.

The foundation for the college was started in 1968, shortly after the college was founded. It is a direct support organization that is responsible for all fundraising activities at the college.

The foundation is led by an executive director and seven additional staff members. Two of the eight staff members are external fundraisers. The foundation utilizes a volunteer board of directors to oversee the daily function of the staff. There are currently 31 board members. Over the past ten years, there have been four executive directors, with one of those serving in an interim capacity.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The data collection for this study was approved by the University of Arkansas Institutional Review Board (IRB Board) (appendix A- SSC Letter IRB) and was conducted in the spring and summer of 2013. Data for the study was retrieved from the institutional data warehouse of Seminole State College, with permission granted from the college's central administration. Data extraction of this nature, typically referred to as ex-post-facto research design, relies on the researcher to identify key elements of the institution's data management system and to have the data reported in a meaningful manner. The researcher has some bias in this process, having worked in professional fundraising for over a decade and has first-hand, personal knowledge of the institution and its fundraising activities.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

1. What was the profile of the contemporary donor at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college?
  - a. What was the demographic profile of donors over the past five years?

To answer this question, demographic data was reported by frequency and percentage. The demographic data included age, race, gender, giving type, giving area, and business/individual donor.
  - b. What was the institutional affiliation of donors over the past five years?

To answer this question, institutional affiliation was reported by frequency and percentage. The intent was for data to indicate whether the donor was an alumnus vs. non-alumnus, vendor, foundation board member, advisory board member, employee, or unknown.

- c. Were there observable differences in the institution's donor profile pre-2008 (2003-2008) and 2008-2012?

To answer this question, a composite table was developed to report summary data for questions 1.a. and 1.b., identifying possible differences among donors over time.

2. What was the profile of contemporary major donors at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college?

For this question, demographic data was reported by frequency and percentage.

The same analysis was performed as questions #1, focusing on major donors to the college.

3. Since fiscal year 2008, what were the giving patterns of major donors at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college?

For this question, data was examined for financial gifts made in each of the fiscal years for the study (FY08, FY09, FY10, FY11, and FY12). For this college, a fiscal year starts on July 1 of one year and ends on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year (example July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008 = FY2008). A frequency count was conducted on each individual donor to arrive at a five-year average giving amount, and then the years with higher or lower giving rates was reported.

4. Studying the annual consistent individual donor over the past five years at Seminole State College:

- a. What was the profile of consistent donors?

To answer this question, the same analysis was used as in question #1.

- b. Were there differences in donors that display decreases in giving, donors who give consistently, and donors that increase their giving?

To answer this question, consistent donors were divided into three categories based on the individuals' last two years of giving during the five years of study.

The first category included those donors who made larger contributions on average for the last two years of the study. The second group included those who made the same level of contributions during the last two years of the study, and the final group consisted of those who were below the average of their first three years.

- d. Was there a correlation between increased donors and involvement with the college?

Due to the nature of retrievable data, a statistical analysis of the correlation was not possible, and data was presented in a descriptive manner. This descriptive presentation was provided to intimate whether a correlation did exist, and would suggest to other researchers that this might or might not be an appropriate area of investigation.

### **Chapter Summary**

The current chapter provided an outline of the intended methods of data collection and analysis for the current study. The study was reliant on the cooperation of the case study community college, Seminole State College, and the integrity of their donor records. Data analysis largely included descriptive statistical analyses with the possibility of correlational

analyses depending upon the availability of data. The study, including data collection and analyses, was completed in the spring and summer of 2013.

#### **IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

Community colleges face a variety of financial challenges, ranging from reduced state support to greater competition for public resources. These challenges have been highlighted in recent years, as the recession, particularly in states such as Florida, where property values have fallen, resulting in diminished tax revenue collection on property, supporting local institutions such as community colleges. The result is a greater reliance on fundraising by community colleges, and the current study explored donors to one urban community college in Orlando, Florida. The current chapter was developed to provide a brief summary of the study, a presentation of the data collected, followed by an analysis of data as related to each of the four research questions. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

##### **Summary of the Study**

American higher education has relied on private fundraising activities since the very first institutions were opened in the 1600s. The trend of fundraising for community colleges, however, has been relatively new, as community college leaders have only begun to become engaged in fundraising during the past two and a half decades, often as a result of needing to increase money available to operate institutions. The result of the new entry into fundraising is that donor data bases and institutional infrastructure, budgets, and habits have not been in place, resulting in role tensions, changes in priority setting, and institutional learning about how to go about raising money.

As fundraising has become an activity of the community college, college leaders have struggled to identify and define successful practices, and literature on fundraising has stressed that the first step for an institution is to understand who donors are and why they are giving. The purpose for conducting the current study was to understand how donors at Seminole State

College, a case study institution, support their institution and how that financial support is structured both over time and gift size.

Study findings are important to college leaders, trustees, state policy makers, and those working in philanthropy in general. The community college donor is largely undefined, and study findings, although descriptive at one case study Florida community college, provide insight and important data on what the population of donors might ultimately look like. Findings also have an important application to the efficiency of community college fundraising, as study findings may allow fundraisers to be more direct, focused, and purposeful in how they go about raising money.

The study made use of an ex-post facto design, that is, the data was collected and held at the institution of study. A major assumption of the study was that the data was held with integrity and would be consistently recorded and kept in a manner that would allow for the completion of the study. As an exploratory study, primarily descriptive statistics were used to begin developing a portrait of the contemporary community college donor.

### **Presentation of Data**

Data for the study was extracted from the Raiser's Edge data base at Seminole State College in the summer of 2013. The initial data export identified multiple problems associated with several questions to be addressed in the study, namely, gender was not consistently reported in donor records and few, if any, age records were populated in the data set. Additionally, the age variable was identified as corrupted due to population of the cell with the year of record creation, meaning that multiple age data variables were coded as 2002 or 2003, for example, meaning that was the year the record was initially created in the database. This type of finding in attempting to extract the data reinforced the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 that indicated one of the major problems community colleges face is in building the infrastructure, such as a reliable

donor data base, to aid in the fundraising process. An additional note should be made that Seminole State hired its first data base administrator in 2012.

For the immediate past five years, approximately 700 donor records were identified and used in data analysis. As shown in Table 1, the number of donors over the past five years ranged from 504 to 697. The number of donors was higher than the number of donors during the previous five years of data included in the study, as shown in Table 2, where there were an average of 458 donors each year with a range of 357 to 585.

**Table 1: Frequency of Donors, 2008-2012**

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Fiscal Year	<i>Affiliation</i>		Total
	Individual	Corporation	
2007-2008	441	167	608
2008-2009	475	167	642
2009-2010	380	124	504
2010-2011	358	137	495
2011-2012	575	122	697

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**Table 2: Frequency of Donors, 2003-2007**

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Fiscal Year	<i>Affiliation</i>		Total
	Individual	Corporation	
2002-2003	187	170	357
2003-2004	293	158	451
2004-2005	225	210	435
2005-2006	313	152	465
2006-2007	408	177	585

---

Additional data have been presented throughout the chapter and organized by relevant research question.

### **Research Question 1**

What was the profile of the contemporary donor at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college?

- a. What was the demographic profile of donors over the past five years?
- b. What was the institutional affiliation of donors over the past five years?
- c. Were there observable differences in the institution's donor profile pre-2008 (2003-2007) and 2008-2012?

The data set retrieved for the current study did not allow for the identification of a demographic profile. However, retrieved data did indicate that over the past five years, there was an average of 589 donors who gave an average of \$1,766,015. For the previous five years, there was an average of 459 donors who gave an average of \$1,590,716. In comparing the two sets of data, both donor giving and donor numbers increased in the last five years over the

previous five years. The donor numbers for the previous five years (2008-2012) were larger on average than the previous five years (2003-2007), suggesting that the attention the College has given to the process of fundraising may be effective.

Individual giving has increased, on average, in the last five years. Individual donors was highest in FY12 with 575. Corporate giving decreased in the last five years, as for fiscal years 2003-07, corporate giving averaged 173 donors a year, but fell to 143 for fiscal years 2008-12. There appeared to be a shift from corporate giving to individual giving at the institution.

Also shown in the Tables, the average gift size per donor actually decreased in the latest five years. For 2008-12, the average gift size per donor was \$2,998, and it was \$3,465 for the previous five years (2003-07).

The majority of donors in each of the past five years, as well as the previous five years, were classified as employees, meaning that either faculty, professional, or support staff who worked for (or previously for) the college were the most likely to support the institution. In each of the ten years of study, there were approximately 20 board members who provided some financial contributions, and as shown in Tables 3 and 4, there were few alumni making contributions, which was again consistent with the literature provided in Chapter 2.

**Table 3: Institutional Affiliation of Individual Donors, 2007-2012**

Fiscal Year	Employee	<i>Affiliation</i> Board Member	Alumnus
2007-2008	223	23	3
2008-2009	209	26	7
2009-2010	215	23	11
2010-2011	211	17	9
2011-2012	408	25	16

**Table 4: Institutional Affiliation of Individual Donors, 2003-2007**

Fiscal Year	Employee	<i>Affiliation</i> Board Member	Alumnus
2002-2003	39	26	6
2003-2004	46	29	5
2004-2005	55	24	3
2005-2006	204	43	3
2006-2007	221	24	4

In comparing Tables 3 and 4, the number of individual donors affiliated with the college increased from the first five years reported (2003-07) to the last five years (2008-12). Employee contributions jumped an average of 100 donors a year (113-213) in comparison with the two sets of years, with the last year having an almost 100% increase in employee donors. Board affiliation remained consistent between the data presented in the two tables. The first five years

had an average of 29 board related donors, and the last five years had an average of 23 board donors.

Alumni donors doubled over the last five years compared to the previous five years (9.2 donors a year vs. 4.2 donors a year). The number of alumni donors reported was low in both sets of data for the college.

For the last five fiscal years, 2008-2012, the number of donors and the amount given were also divided by giving level, consistent with the theoretical framework of the study. This sorting of donors has been illustrated in a giving pyramid in Appendix B for 2008 – 2012 (Figures 1-5). These figures show the number of donors in several giving levels used by the college. For each fiscal year, these figures capture total donors, total amount given, average gift, common gift, number of major gifts (\$10,000 +), and gifts between \$1,000 and \$10,000. The depiction of this data helped provide an understanding of the pattern of giving at Seminole State.

Looking at the data for the last five years, several observations were noted. Total giving over the last five years decreased for three straight years before rebounding in FY12. The average number of donors was 589, and three of the five years had more than the average number of donors.

Major gifts of \$10,000 or more declined over the last five years. From 2008-2012, major gifts dropped 37% from a high of 30 to 19 in the most recent year. There were on average 22 major gifts each year.

The average gift amount over the last five years has fluctuated from year to year. From a high of \$5011 in FY 2012, to a low of \$1973 the year before, the average gift amount for the five years is \$2,866.

Although the average gift for the last five years was \$2,886, the most common gift size in each of the last five years was lower. For one year, the common gift was \$100 (FY 09) and for FY12, the most common gift was \$5.

The pyramids shown as Figures 1-5 do confirm the pattern of giving suggested in the theoretical framework of the study. In each Figure, the largest number of donors were making the smallest gifts, and in each case, gift sizes increased with fewer number of donors. This means that the idea of the theoretical framework, that of growing gifts, appears to be consistent with the detail of gift giving at Seminole State.

### **Research Question 2**

What was the profile of contemporary major donors at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college, during the past five years?

As shown in Table 5, the data recorded at Seminole State proved problematic for tracking selected demographic information. As noted, only two records indicated a gender, as 17 of the 19 were corporations making the contribution. Similarly, the average age of the donors was 74, but again, that was only for two major donors. Such information was not recorded for individuals with oversight for corporate giving.

**Table 5: Contemporary Major Donor Profile at Seminole State College**

*N=19*

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Characteristics	Frequency/Average
Gender	
Female	1
Male	1
Average Age	74*
Gift size	\$164,538.47
Institutional Affiliation	
Employee	0
Board member	6
Alumnus	0
Giving pattern	
Last year	16
Past two years	15
Past three years	15
Past four years	13

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*\*Note: The average age was computed on the only two individuals with an age recorded in the data.*

### **Research Question 3**

Since fiscal year 2008, what were the giving patterns of major donors at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college?

As shown in Table 6, there were 19 major donors identified to be studied during the five year period. Seminole State defined a major gift as over \$10,000, and a major donor was a person or entity that made that contribution. Of the 19 major donors, 13 made a gift in each of the five years of study, although six of those gifts decreased during the five-year period of time. A total of 17 donors increased their gift sizes, as 12 increased their gifts during the last two years of the five-year period of time, and five increased their gifts over the last three years. Also

shown in the Table, during the past five years, six donors reduced the size of their gifts, three increased their gifts less than 10%, and one increased a gift size by more than 50%.

The pattern, subsequently, was that most major donors gave consistently, but did not parallel the concept presented in the theoretical framework of increased gift size each year.

**Table 6: Major Donor Giving Patterns**

*N=19*

Pattern characteristic	Frequency (%)
Donor gave each year (over 5 year period)	
Yes	13
No	6
Increased gift size	
Each year	0
Last 4 years	0
Last 3 years	5
Last 2 years	12
Gift size increase from year 1-5	
Decrease	6
Less than 10%	3
10-50%	0
More than 50%	3
Same	1

#### **Research Question 4**

Studying the annual consistent individual donor over the past five years at Seminole State College:

- a. What was the profile of consistent donors?
- b. Were there differences in donors that display decreases in giving, donors who give consistently, and donors that increase their giving?
- c. Was there a correlation between increased donors and institutional affiliation with the college?

Contemporary consistent donors were classified as those individuals who made a gift during the 2012 fiscal year, but who had also made a gift in each of the past five years. As shown in Table 7, the majority of donors, by more than a two-to-one margin, were female, with 80% of the donors being employees (past or present) of the institution. Approximately the same number of gifts were either under \$100, between \$101-\$250, or over \$500.

Although the output of the data did not allow for the answering of questions 4-B and 4-C, data results did show that nearly half of all donors (47%) increased their gift size from the first year of the five years of study to their last year, some of them increasing their gift by over 50% (n=40).

**Table 7: Contemporary Consistent Donor Profile at Seminole State College***N=152*

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Characteristics	Frequency
Gender	
Female	102
Male	49
Unknown	1
Average Age	Unknown
Gift size	
Under \$100	54
\$101-250	46
\$251-500	11
Over \$500	41
Institutional Affiliation	
Employee	122
Board member	12
Alumnus	3
Other	15
Gift size increase from year 1-5	
Decrease	36
Less than 10%	4
10-50%	28
More than 50%	40
Same	44

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### **Chapter Summary**

The current chapter presented a summary of the study, its importance and purpose, and then presented the data that was used in answering the four research questions that were the focus of the study. Study findings indicated a general, moderate support for the concept of the pyramid of giving, but also noted the strong reliance on employee and corporate gifts by the case study community college.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION**

The current study was designed to better understand fundraising in the American community college. Throughout the history of American higher education, colleges and universities have been engaged in seeking external money from various stakeholders, and community colleges have begun to more aggressively pursue fundraising as an option to replace decreased public money. The current chapter provides a summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the data analysis, and a discussion of how the findings relate to the initial proposed theoretical framework of the study. The chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

### **Summary of the Study**

The current study was conducted to attempt to better understand donor behavior of community college donors. Using Seminole State College in Orlando, Florida as a case study, the current study attempted to retrieve data from the college's donor information system to profile and follow donor giving patterns over a period of time. Specifically, the purpose for conducting the study was to understand how donors at Seminole State College support their institution and how that financial support is structured both over time and gift size.

Study findings have importance to a variety of potential institutional stakeholders, but ultimately have the most use and value to fundraising professionals working community colleges. By understanding the affiliation and relationships donors have with a community college, development activities can be both more efficient and cost-effective, ultimately leading to an increased level of external money raised for the institution. An added element of interest in the study findings are the elements of fundraising theory that can be addressed in the theoretical framework of the study. The theory behind the giving pattern element of the study is that donors increase their giving levels as they invest more of themselves and their time in the institution. Giving patterns presented here add validity to the understanding and acceptance of that theory.

Data retrieval was problematic, and was consistent with the literature on community college fundraising. Several authors (Ryan & Palmer, 2005) have noted that infrastructure issues, such as record keeping and donor profiles, are severely limited at many community colleges, and with little past reliance on fundraising, they have had no incentive to create such systems. Seminole State's historical data base similarly proved sporadic in terms of data fields required to answer the research questions, and in many instances, the structure of the data was not kept in such a way that it could be converted to fully answer each of the research questions. Regardless of the problems with the structure of the data set, answers to the research questions were developed to the best of the researcher's ability.

#### *Research Question 1*

What was the profile of the contemporary donor at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college?

- a. What was the demographic profile of donors over the past five years?
- b. What was the institutional affiliation of donors over the past five years?
- c. Were there observable differences in the institution's donor profile pre-2008 (2003-2007) and 2008-2012?

The answer to Research Question 1 was that the predicted data set did not allow for the creation of a demographic profile of donors, but, data did reveal that donors were primarily employees (past or present) of the institution with average gifts being relatively small, such as \$5 in FY12. There were several differences between the two time periods of study, with a greater number of donors making gifts in the last five years as compared to the previous five years, although there were fewer, on average, major gifts during the last five years as compared to the previous five years.

#### *Research Question 2*

What was the profile of contemporary major donors at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college, during the past five years?

Major donors were those individuals who made a contribution of \$10,000 or more, and of the 19 identified, 17 were corporate donors. Of the two non-corporate donors, one was male and one female, and they had an average age of 74. Major donors combined for making over \$3 million in gifts, with an average gift size of \$164,538. When tracked over the past five years, 13 of these donors gave consistently, and 16 of the 19 made a gift the previous year.

*Research Question 3*

Since fiscal year 2008, what were the giving patterns of major donors at Seminole State College, an urban southeastern community college?

Major donors to Seminole State College typically gave each year during the previous five years, with 12 of the 19 major donors increasing their gift size during the last two years. Over the last five years, nearly a third (n=6) decreased their gift size and three increased their gift size by more than 50%.

*Research Question 4*

Studying the annual consistent individual donor over the past five years at Seminole State College:

- a. What was the profile of consistent donors?
- b. Were there differences in donors that display decreases in giving, donors who give consistently, and donors that increase their giving?
- c. Was there a correlation between increased donors and institutional affiliation with the college?

The way the data output were structured, an analysis was not possible to answer questions 4-B and 4-C; however, the majority of contemporary consistent donors were female (n=102), gave

over \$100 a year (n=98), were employees of the institution (n=122), and nearly half increased their gift size over a five year period of time (n=47).

## **Conclusions**

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. Employees are strong supporters of the case study institution. The largest number of donors in each year of the study were college employees, suggesting that they are individuals who do support the institution and its work. Without speculating about why they support their institution, they consistently kept giving, even at small levels, to support their college.
2. Alumni support for the case study institution is minimal, at best. As suggested in the literature and reinforced in the study findings, few alumni were providing financial contributions to their community college alma mater. This may be do to any number of reasons, including being on campus for a very short period of time to receive some specific training, having little investment in the life of the community college campus, or even taking online classes and never physically being on the campus. These ideas are consistent with literature that has suggested that alumni support of community colleges has historically been limited.
3. Board affiliation does lead to giving. Board members provided consistent giving to the institution, and although there may be consistency issues in coding, approximately 20 board members were giving consistently out of approximately 30 members. Data coding in some instances may have coded a board member as corporation, but regardless, nearly two thirds of the board members were giving consistently.
4. Overall, fundraising at the case study institution is improving. The number of donors, as well as the total amount raised for the institution, was higher in the past five years as

compared to the previous five years. This might be attributable to the end of the economic recession in Florida or a new fundraising staff, but regardless, the institution is making progress in raising more money, more consistently, over the past ten years.

5. The database has more capability than has historically been used. As noted early in Chapter 4, there were multiple variables and cells that were unpopulated in the institution's data warehouse. This lack of consistency in reporting and storing data is problematic if data are to be used successfully in expanding fundraising activities.
6. One in five donors is a consistent donor over the period of study. This finding suggests that donors have a consistent care for the institution, and at some level, institutional officers through their personalities or processes, steward these gifts well.
7. Study results can neither fully support nor deny the theoretical framework of the study. Findings about the giving levels increasing and the number of donors seemed to reinforce the pyramid concept, as did the gift size increase shown in Table 7. Yet, there was not enough evidence in the study findings to fully support the idea that individuals make small gifts for repeated years and then increase their gift size consistently.

## **Recommendations**

### *Recommendations for Further Research*

Based on the study, the following recommendations for further research are suggested:

1. Further research should expand beyond one community college and include both multi-campus systems and rural, suburban, and urban community colleges. Additionally, drawing upon national samples of community colleges will allow for a generalizable study of the community college donor.
2. Further research should be conducted with more complete and fully populated data sets.

The lack of variable population in the current study was a major limitation that was

identified, and more complete longitudinal data may result in a more comprehensive set of conclusions and recommendations.

3. Further research should explore the motivation of employees to support their employer. A study of this nature should identify whether employees give simply because they are asked or whether they truly feel a level of altruism for their institution.
4. Further research should segment gift solicitation techniques. Results of a study of this nature will allow fundraising professionals the ability to be more accurate and focused in their solicitations, and ultimately, result in cost effectiveness studies of different solicitation techniques.
5. Further research should include more and different types of data, including, for example, volunteer hours committed by donors, leadership positions of donors, and donor peer solicitation. Data such as these may lead to a better understanding and acceptance of the theoretical framework of the study, and a regression analysis that predicts gift level increases could further validate the framework.

### *Recommendations for Practice*

Based on the study, the following recommendations for practice are suggested:

1. Seminole State College leaders should spend time enhancing their data management systems and techniques. Many of the variable cells were available, yet few were populated causing the difficulty in completing the study. An investment by the institution into their data management system, and the personnel necessary to keep up the system, may result in a better tracking, and ultimately better stewardship, system.
2. Fundraising professionals in community colleges should continue to make use of employee giving campaigns. The high number of donors who were college employees indicates that these individuals must believe, on some level, in the work they are doing.

The success of employee giving should be replicated where possible, and tracked to see if similar levels of success are achieved.

3. Giving programs, affinity clubs, and similar programs and processes that encourage further giving should recognize the large number of women who are giving to support Seminole State College.
4. Data from the study should be shared with Seminole State College leaders, and other community college leaders, to illustrate how data can be used to understand donor behavior and tendencies. This data should then be examined further to align changes in number of donors and gift levels with the types of solicitation used in each of the years of study.
5. Fundraising professionals should continue to explore corporations that use the benefits of community colleges, and align solicitations to make use of these relationships. This was especially true for major gifts at the case study institution.

### **Discussion**

Study findings reinforced much of what the literature on community college fundraising noted and stressed. Most notably, the data repository used by the case study community college was more incomplete than originally thought, and such inconsistent data collection and holding may ultimately cause issues with fundraising success. Additionally, much of the past success of fundraising was tied to corporate or business giving, suggesting that those who benefit from the institutions contributions to the community are the ones who support the institution. For example, those businesses (corporations) who hire welders or allied health professionals are also the ones who turn around and provide gifts to the college.

Somewhat surprising was that the college relied very heavily on employees to make contributions, although as noted in Research Question 1, most of these gifts were small cash

contributions. The high level of giving by employees indicates their commitment to the institution in which they work, but also can be leveraged by fundraising staff to illustrate the high level of commitment that employees have to what they are trying to accomplish. In essence, staff members support their institution in a real demonstrated way, with their own resources.

Study findings moderately support the theoretical framework of the study, that being, the notion of progressive giving resulting in larger gifts over time. The Figures included in the Appendices, for example, do show a consistency with the theory that gift size corresponds with level of giving, but that more research is needed to identify if other factors, such as involvement and volunteering for the institution, correspond with giving levels.

Overall, the study presents a first step in looking further at how community colleges go about raising money to both help off-set revenue shortfalls and to build on programs or centers of excellence. Advice from the researcher to future scholars would be to conduct a thorough audit of data systems and data integrity prior to launching a similar investigation.

### **Chapter Summary**

The current chapter provided an overview of the study and the findings of the research questions, along with conclusions drawn from data analysis and recommendations for both practice and further research. The chapter included a discussion section that highlighted some of the challenges in conducting the study, and a note about how the study reinforced, in a limited manner, the theoretical framework of the study.

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## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS IRB APPROVAL LETTER**

May 30, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Gyllin  
Michael Miller

FROM: Ro Windwalker  
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 13-05-717

Protocol Title: *Donor Profile of an Urban Southeastern Community College:  
Profiles in Giving Patterns*

Review Type:  EXEMPT  EXPEDITED  FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 05/30/2013 Expiration Date: 05/29/2014

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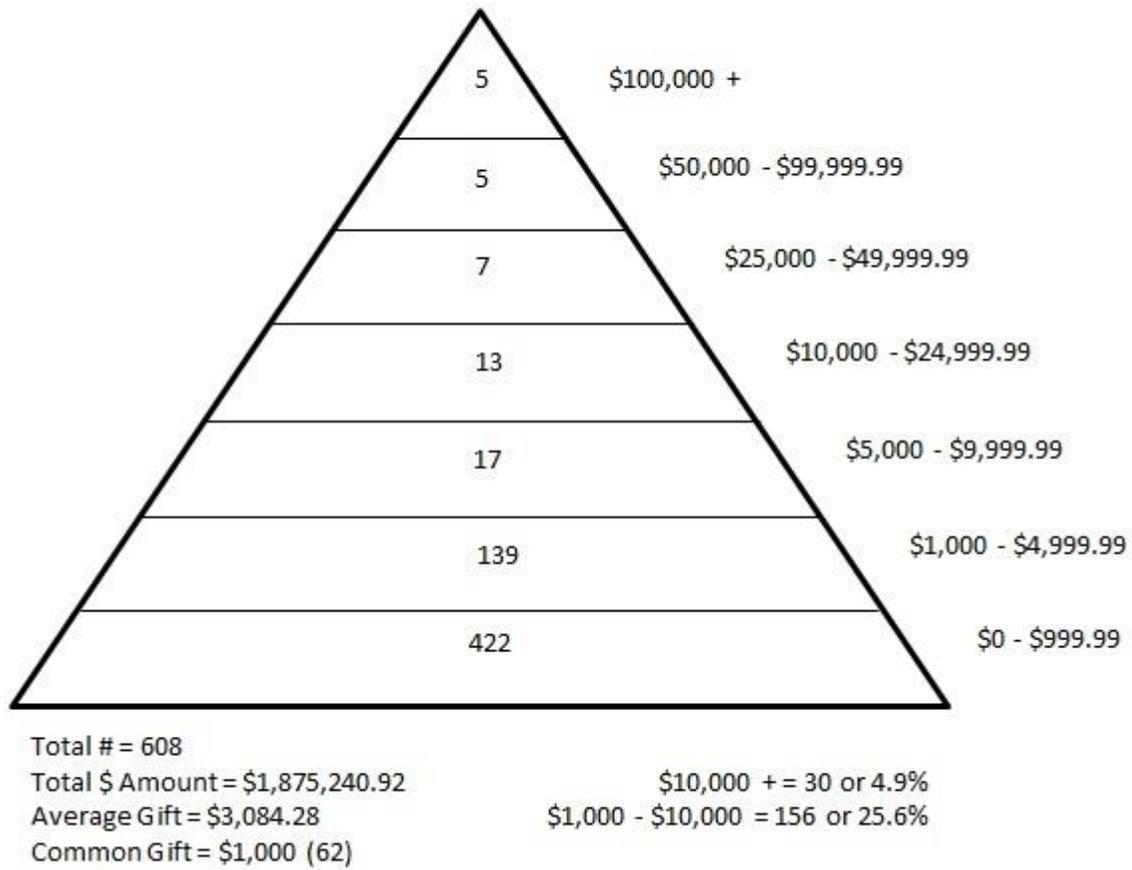
Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<http://vpred.uark.edu/210.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

**This protocol has been approved for 200 participants.** If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 210 Administration Building, 5-2208, or [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).

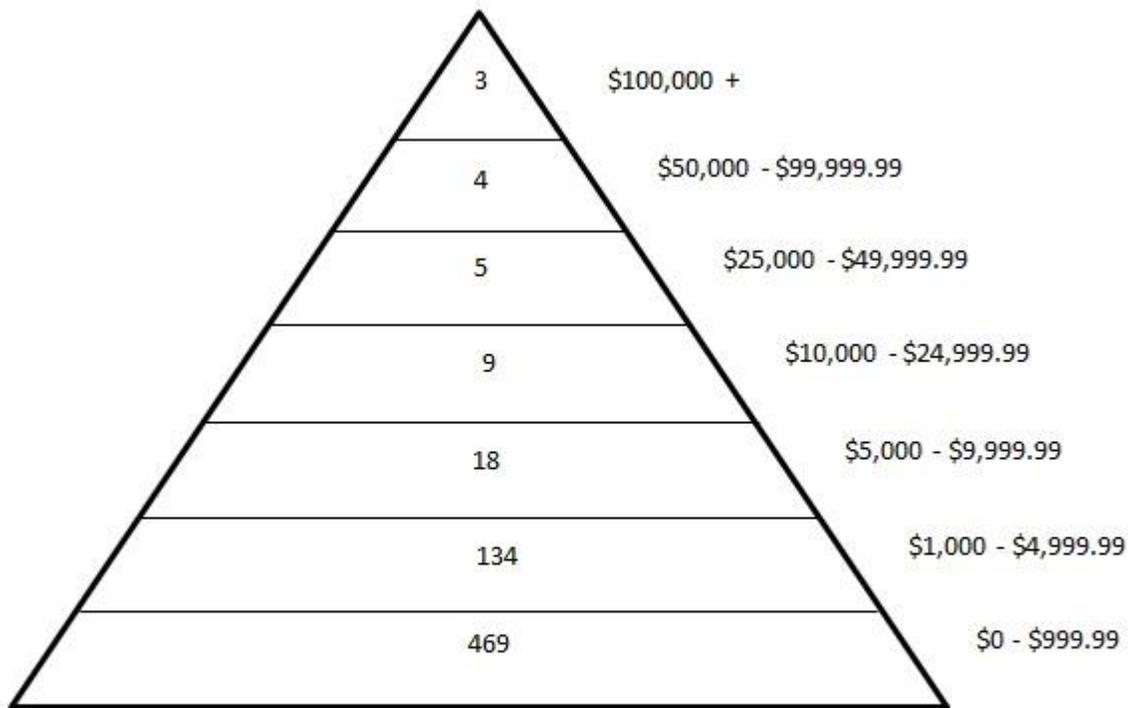
**APPENDIX B: GIVING PYRAMIDS 2008-2012**

**Fiscal Year 2008**



**Figure 1: Donor Pyramid for FY 2008**

**Fiscal Year 2009**



Total # = 642

Total \$ Amount = \$1,323,142.02

Average Gift = \$2,060.97

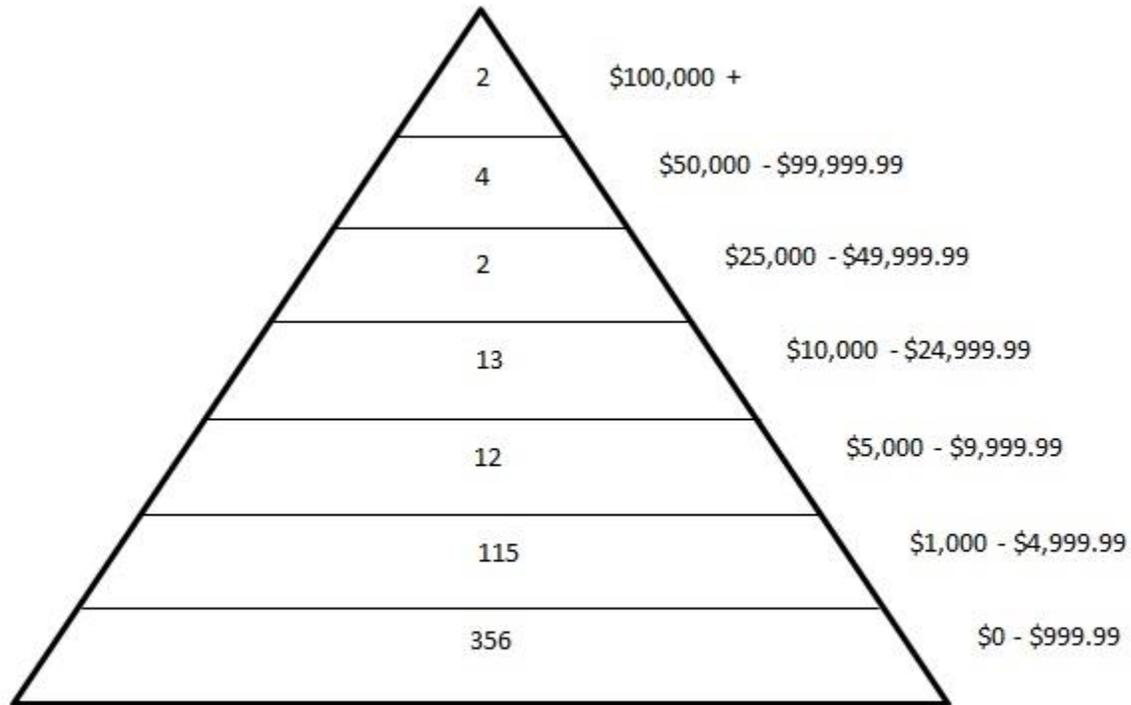
Common Gift = \$100 (74)

\$10,000 + = 20 or 3.2%

\$1,000 - \$10,000 = 152 or 23.7%

**Figure 2: Donor Pyramid for FY 2009**

**Fiscal Year 2010**



Total # = 504

Total \$ Amount = \$1,162,193.52

Average Gift = \$2,305.94

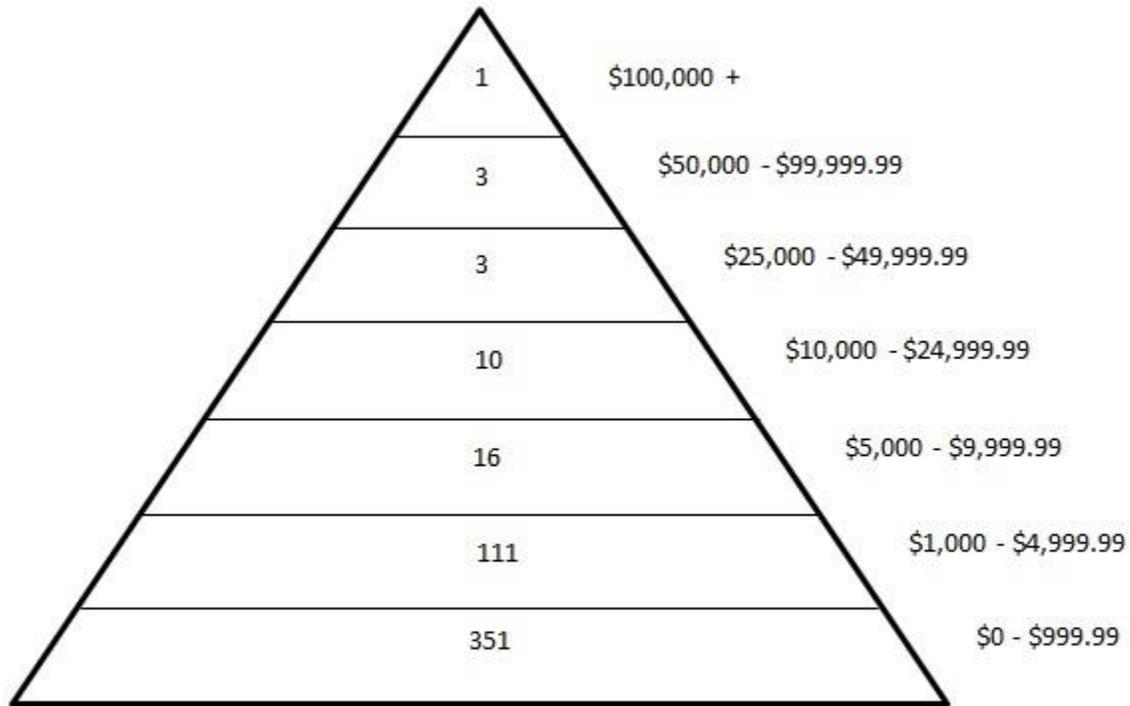
Common Gift = \$1,000 (48)

\$10,000 + = 21 or 4.2%

\$1,000 - \$10,000 = 127 or 25.2%

**Figure 3: Donor Pyramid for FY 2010**

**Fiscal Year 2011**

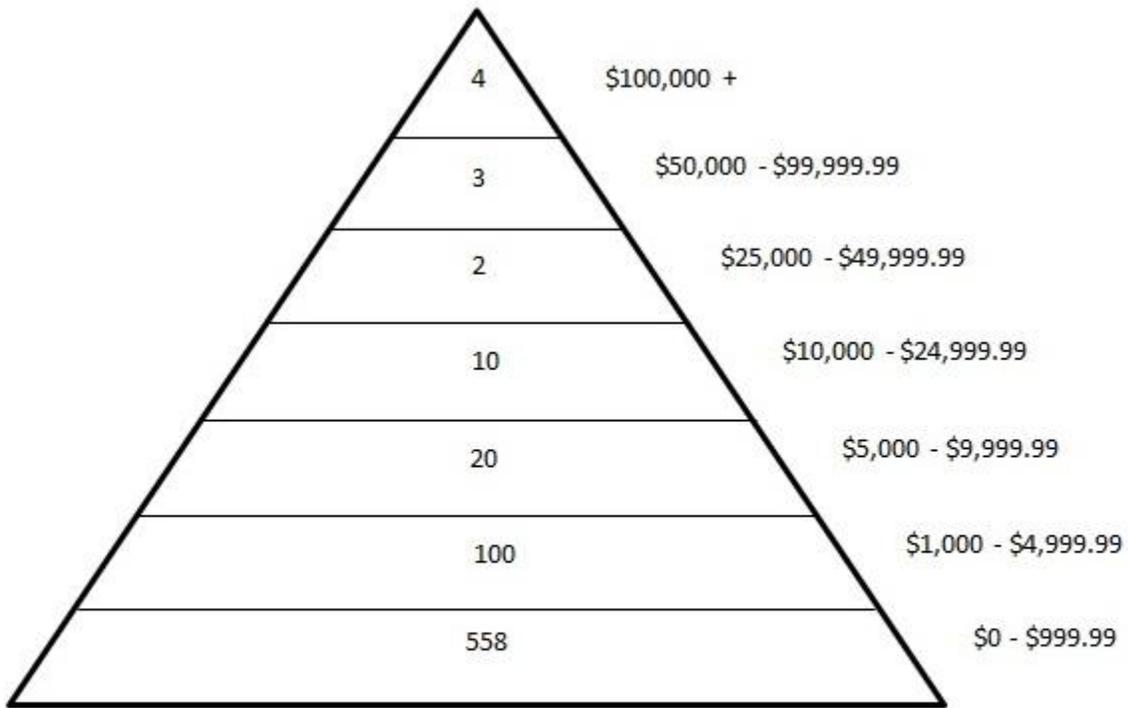


Total # = 495  
Total \$ Amount = \$976,695.39  
Average Gift = \$1,973.12  
Common Gift = \$1,000 (32)

\$10,000 + = 17 or 3.4%  
\$1,000 - \$10,000 = 127 or 25.7%

**Figure 4: Donor Pyramid for FY 2011**

**Fiscal Year 2012**



Total # = 697

Total \$ Amount = \$3,492,803.27

Average Gift = \$5,011.19

Common Gift = \$5.00 (51)

\$10,000 + = 19 or 2.7%

\$1,000 - \$10,000 = 120 or 17.2%

**Figure 5: Donor Pyramid for FY 2012**