

THE FIRST MONDAY REPORT

Thoughts on Fundraising for Campus Ministry

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What I have learned about raising funds and fun in Campus Ministry

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Hello, good to see you – here are the instructions I received from Galen, that he would like a "*what I have learned*" or "*my best advice*" kind of thing. *It doesn't have to be scholarly. It's meant to be like conversation with your colleagues in a way that would be helpful to them based on your own experience.* I'm relieved of the need to be scholarly He didn't give me permission for poetry, but we can work on limericks when we're all done. So I am having this imaginary conversation.

Frank, who knows more about this than I do, can buy our beer and coffee (you choose – hey, this is Madison where you can get a triple espresso and a Maibock in the same place). I did pulpit supply last week so I have the funds for the refreshments. My treat.

Slainte Mhath!

Pulpit supply, by the way, is a pretty good way of keeping yourself familiar with the parish life. It is a good way to publicize campus ministry. I don't have a canned "campus ministry" sermon (oh I have lines I use the first time I am someplace – thanking them for being older than I am, thanking them for their support of campus ministries through their offerings, inviting them to visit our building, use it for retreats), but I preach on the text – I figure good preaching (which they sometimes get from me) is good P.R. (development people call that a part of *cultivation*).

Now, if I'm specifically called to tell about campus ministry, I make sure I *have a student or two or three* with me. People in the pews much more enjoy listening to young people telling their story than to an old guy preaching.

No, Frank, that's okay, we all spill sometimes – just wipe it up before it stains.

Now, where was I?

Oh yeah, in the congregations. Things are changing there and it differs from synod to synod. We're anticipating getting permission from our new bishop to ask congregations to support us financially. People and congregations are looking for more local opportunities. Development people say *Giving begets giving* meaning that congregational and individual tendencies to give in one place most often increases their giving in other places.

One pastor I had an official relationship with in campus ministry came to my office and demanded we drop all his members from our mailing list. “Don’t fish in my pond” he said. Most clergy nowadays are more aware of the realities of giving.

But, always respect the wishes and the integrity of the pastors and congregations. Thanks Frank... why don’t we order a pitcher – they’re harder to spill.

How many of you have good alumni lists? Good. They can always get better. You say you don’t really have one? I’ve found there are all kinds of sources to fill that list. Other alums will give you names. Look at old newsletters, old minutes of meetings, any material you have, the alumni/ae office of your schools may have information too. It is worth the effort.

We have very loyal alums. They hear from us at least four times a year – two newsletters (our students are electronic and don’t read paper, but the alums still like pictures and words) and two appeals – our big one is November and a follow up in May. We also send copies to all the bishops’ offices in our region so they can see what we’re doing. Had one bishop in another state call me, mad that we were asking him for money. I had a good conversation; we both laughed, we encouraged each other and I gave him Frank’s mobility papers.

When I first got to Madison we had to sign all our appeal letters by hand – more than 1500 of them. When they numbered over 2000 we were granted dispensation from the signing. I don’t know where that rule came from. Don’t obey it. You have better things to do with your time.

Cheers.

We have categories of giving and we increased them a few years back – running from \$100 to \$5,000. No, nobody has checked \$5,000 yet but who knows. We have received gifts in that amount, just not from our appeals.

Thrivent *Simply Giving* and *Giving Plus* forms always accompany our appeal. Use of those increases every year – they’re easy to copy and pay for themselves and beyond.

We also have a group of *Sustaining Friends* – people who give \$100 a month. This year I’m going to ask specific alums to begin doing that and to ask their contemporaries to do so as well, or at least start on some monthly level. We talk to our current students about the fact that they will be asked to contribute after they leave. Our current Student Coordinating Committee chair encourages regular giving at worship in a most Wisconsin way saying something to the effect, ‘Gee if I can pay ten bucks for a pitcher of beer I can give that much once a week to God.’ I want to talk more about the students and our plans later.

Sure Frank, we’ll wait until you come back....

We have a 24 hour turnaround for thank you letters too. That’s important. I compose the *Thank You Letter* when I compose the *Appeal Letter*. They’re stored on our office computer and easily sent.

Keep a good data base (that reminds me, Frank.. were you asking for receipts? I think this is a business expense). We use *Sage*. It is very good for entering a variety of information, pulling out the names you need, keeping track of giving histories and so on. Do some research if you don’t have a good data base program. Ask around. It is essential to have good records.

All of your schools have development offices, right? I have found on our campus that the people involved in development are highly ethical and effective. Madison is secular, but development people speak of meaning and belief and service and effective care for others.

A great quote from the Vice President of the University of Wisconsin Development office (who is an alum of this ministry and helps on the national level as well as the local): “When you ask for money, you get advice; when you ask for advice, you get money.” Sweet.

Visit your development office. Ask them questions. Our Development office offers a seminar on fund raising for non profits. You can come to it if you want. You can stay in our building. Frank, you’ve stayed there a few times. It’s a great place isn’t it? Well, that was your fault – you should know Madison is colder than Columbia.

But I’m off the subject.

Seek out opportunities to learn from people in development. Learn the language and procedures of trusts and wills and all that. More people are giving gifts of stock. You need to have a financial firm licensed to handle stock transfers. Ask around or find some of your business school grads.

About those major gifts – \$25,000 and up – often coming from bequests, wills, cashed-in stocks and market funds – begin a list of people who might be possible gifters (which is way different from a grifter) and begin to familiarize them with your ministry – they should already know about you, but not necessarily.

Here’s the really important part. Don’t do it alone. There are people willing to help and some of them are old hands at asking for gifts – these are campuses after all. Current and former faculty, supportive alums, extroverts; these can help with the cultivation of potential givers.

Have a plan – set a goal each year for your appeals. Set a goal for your major gifts. Do you have an endowment? Good. Build it. Plan to build it.

That means it is essential to have your board involved and in agreement. They should all be significant donors. Each board meeting should include a report on development and progress. Board members know who major givers might be. Have somebody on your Board who is familiar with fund raising.

Another one? Who wants more ...? Want some popcorn too? Want to bring that back with you Frank?

The most important thing... as you’ve heard from other colleagues – Chell was supposed to be here but he is hosting a buffalo chip throwing contest as a fund raiser and can’t make it – is to *have a healthy, exciting and faithful ministry*. It can be hard to be the development officer and the minister or pastor, but I find the most meaningful aspect of life and ministry is sharing the sacrament every week with the students here. It is fun and rewarding to see them take leadership and grow.

If what went on during the week – in their mutual support, their sharp questioning, their faithful service, their increasing sense of being the church – wasn’t as good and necessary as it is, even I couldn’t lie about giving to us. You share stories with me of the excitement, successes and failures on campus. All ministries are mixed bags, but the Spirit is active.

Skol

Now this next year, Luther Memorial Church partnered with us to get a \$100,000 grant from Thrivent to “enhance a culture of generosity” for their members and for students active here. This sort of emphasis had been one of our goals for the year and the grant is a serendipitous aid.

We will spend time during the year helping students develop an intentional sense of sharing. Mark Allen Powell’s book *Giving to God* will be available to our inner circle leaders (50 or so students) – I’m not so naïve as to think they’ll read it right away, but we’ll guide them through it. Powell will be in town to speak to the subject and students will be included in the discussions

A local financial advisor (and active Lutheran) will present four sessions on finances. The students have met her and like her very much. The grant will pay for bribery food.

As part of the program, there will be intentional time for looking at planned giving. Members of our board are gathering lists of local alums to invite and include in that.

This next fall we are beginning an annual dinner to thank major contributors. We will have students on hand to share the meal and talk informally about their experience in campus ministry and thank them personally for their generosity. We will have a presentation highlighting the year’s ministry. Any way to stay in touch, express excitement and say thank you is good.

Ahhhh thanks for listening. I have to go help baby sit grandson now. Here’s his picture – so cute he’s dangerous. God bless your efforts. Frank, don’t steal the pitcher.