

Chapter 1

Studying Philanthropy and Fundraising in the Field of Higher Education: A Proposed Conceptual Model

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ABSTRACT

Colleges and universities are historic institutions in the U.S. that have sprung up since the founding of Harvard College in 1636. Though their evolution and development is quite simple, the involvement of numerous organizations and groups with philanthropy and higher education is quite complex. Utilizing resource dependency theory and institutional theory, this chapter reviews the historical, sociological, and organizational overview of the practices of philanthropy as it relates to American higher education. Two conceptual frameworks are developed and proposed by the author for teacher-scholars and advanced practitioners seeking to conduct formal research on institutional advancement in higher education. The paper argues that the fundraising professionals (e.g., board of trustees, the president, development officers) role on securing major resources and private gifts within the organization and field level is the result of coercion, imitation, and conformity to institutional rule, institutional isomorphism, and normatively based decision making in higher education.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-9664-8.ch001

INTRODUCTION

In the last 10 years, expectations about the role of philanthropy and fundraising in higher education have increased. Notably, these expectations are based on assumptions and actual behavior that philanthropic organizations can enhance the capacity and performance of postsecondary institutions (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2011). Today, no institutions of higher education have survived without some form of fundraising or gifts for the institution (Bernstein, 2013). Every public and private institution is grappling with a philanthropic agenda in the 21st century. As financial aid support declines and tuition rates continue to rise, colleges and universities have grown much more dependent on the increased philanthropic involvements of the wealthy to fund academic and professional programs, to raise college participation and completion rates, and to build state-of-the-art facilities for high quality teaching and research in higher education.

Generally, the role of philanthropy and fundraising has played an enormous role in fulfilling individuals' career goals and promises, and the vitality of American society. Payton (1988) once defined philanthropy as the "voluntary action for the public good." These voluntary actions performed by philanthropists and the wealthy are often viewed as heroes of the 21st century, whose gifts have fueled the advancement of lifelong learning in higher education. While the term philanthropy is seen as a broad concept that encompasses the wide range of private giving for larger public purposes, philanthropy research today has not been widely accepted as part of higher education research for very long. As philanthropy research has moved from once being increasingly atheoretical to now university-based scholarship (Drezner & Huehls, 2014), bridging new ideas and theories into university practice is vastly needed to help teacher-scholars and advanced practitioners conceptualize organizational behavior and their effectiveness to organizational performance in higher education (Bastedo, 2012; Dee, 2014; Kelly, 2002).

To clarify, institutions of higher education are under intense pressure to conform to new fundraising policies and procedures (e.g., gift acceptance policy, donor-privacy policy) worldwide against the changing demographics, increased competition, and reduced state and federal funding for postsecondary education (Hendrickson, Lane, Harris, & Dorman, 2012). Specifically, colleges and universities have to compete for students and resources (e.g., financial, physical, natural, human, information, labor) by adopting market-like ideologies or market-oriented mechanisms to stay competitive in the global marketplace (Edwards, 2004). Statistically speaking, state spending on higher education has significantly increased to \$10.5 billion from 1990 to 2010 (Quintero & Orozco, 2012). Although state funding in higher education

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budgets continues to drop across the United States, private gifts to support the needs of colleges and universities is vastly growing nationwide as a result to globalization and the increasing adoption of neoliberal policies moving away from funding postsecondary education (Giroux, 2014).

Nowadays, many organizations of higher education are value-driven and profit seeking (Pfeffer, 1972; Villalonga & McGahan, 2005; Weitz & Shenhav, 2000), federations of loosely coupled parts (Weick, 1976), and are dependent on a network of interconnectedness with outside individuals and organizations (Pfeffer, 1987). Typically, postsecondary education is predominantly seen as a private commodity in which higher education's commitment to serve the public good in a democratic society is being replaced by "economic rationality" (Atlbach, 2002; Gumpert, 2000). Though the study of higher education organizations has expanded significantly with broader organizational theory (Youn & Murphy, 1997), particularly within the disciplines of economics, psychology, and sociology in the nonprofit sector, limited research have yet to explore the academic structures (e.g., norms, rules, routines, schemes) and subcultures (e.g., political, bureaucratic, symbolic, human resource) of university advancement. Furthermore, there is no consensus among scholars about what should be studied, nor the most appropriate disciplinary settings in philanthropy and advancement research (Keidan, Jung, & Pharoah, 2014).

Consequently, this chapter attempts to ignite new excitement from scholars and practitioners for conducting formal research on institutional advancement in higher education. As philanthropy continues to strengthen the U.S. economy and enhance the quality of life for all people, this article seeks to build a coherent theory for higher education fundraising that is consistent with existing theories of organizations. Unlike numerous past research that have solely focused on best practices (Brittingham & Pezullo, 1990; Rowland, 1983; Worth, 2002), this paper investigate on the role of organizational theory – namely resource dependency theory and institutional theory - in explaining the evolving role of fundraising professionals in higher education, with special attention to the environments (e.g., isomorphism, knowledge systems, institutional beliefs, rules, and rituals) of institutional advancement at American colleges and universities. However, given the global nature of the higher education industry, it is expected that this chapter will have applicability and pertinence beyond the United States and to all types of universities (e.g., public, private, for-profit) around the world. The ultimate goal of this chapter is to challenge fundraising professionals, researchers, and senior officials to advance philanthropy research and contribute to public policy (e.g., giving campaigns, tax breaks, match-funding schemes) and legal scholarship (e.g., regulation of charitable giving) through teaching in hopes of advancing fundraising in the evolving field of higher education philanthropy in the coming decades (Bloland, 2002; Caboni, 2010).

PHILANTHROPY AND HIGHER EDUCATION AS A FIELD OF RESEARCH

The study of philanthropy as a distinct scholarly field of inquiry within higher education administration is a relatively new phenomenon (Proper & Caboni, 2014). Notably, the growing interest in the study of philanthropy has led fundraising professionals to examine the role and function of institutional advancement, a field that includes fundraising, alumni relations, public relations, and marketing. Historically, philanthropists and philanthropy has played an integral part to American higher education since the founding of Harvard College in 1636. Specifically, philanthropy has created educational opportunity for countless young men and women whose lives have been enriched and whose contributions to society have been greater. For example, John Harvard, an English minister and godly gentleman, was recognized as the first private donor to set the foundation for professional fundraising in U.S. higher education. While several philanthropists and humanitarians (e.g., William Hibbens, Hugh Peter, Thomas Weld, Elihu Yale) have played a pivotal role in the creation of Harvard College, philanthropy and fundraising for colleges and universities did not become an organized activity until the turn of the twentieth century when educational fundraising became more professionalized through well-organized advancement and development programs (Thelin & Trollingier, 2014).

To clarify, the term “development” did not come into use until the 1920s when Northwestern University established the nation’s first Department of Development during a period that many scholars dubbed the “golden era” of higher education philanthropy. Although the term “development” did not gain widespread recognition until after World War II, the concept of raising money and asking for money would leave many questions about how the alumni relations, public relations, and fundraising functions should be organized in the academy. Historically, the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Foundation, and the U.S. Education Department’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education typically threw out the general concept of philanthropy. Such issue prompted A. Westley Rowland (1986), editor of the *Handbook of Institutional Advancement*, to establish the phrase “institutional advancement” to expand philanthropy research into the field of higher education administration. Rowland (1986) defined institutional advancement as an all “encompassing activity and program undertaken by an institution to develop understanding and support from all its constituencies in order to achieve its goals in securing such resources as students, faculty, and dollars” (p. xiii). Though the approaches to fundraising for colleges and universities have slightly changed since the intergenerational “great wealth transfer” era (Schervish & Havens, 1998), the current work of educational fundraising still remains vastly the same today across the United States and abroad.

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Statistically speaking, during the 2014 fiscal year, donors gave more than \$37 billion to U.S. colleges and universities the most ever raised in a one-year period and nearly a 10 percent increase over 2012 (*Giving USA*, 2015). Such increase is likely due to the fact that more students and alumni are reporting greater satisfaction with their college experience; a long-serving president; institutional maturity; a strong national ranking; a high percentage of tenured professors; a relatively large endowment; and regional location (Johnson Grossnickle and Associates, 2013). While alumni often serve as the primary fundraising constituency for colleges and universities, private giving from parents, community members, as well as athletic fans have also begun to support institutions of higher education during the era of public austerity and private abundance (Proper & Caboni, 2014). For example, Harvard University alumni John Paulson donated \$400 million to the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences in June 2015 to provide endowment for faculty development, research, scholarships, and financial aid. Mr. Paulson's "mega-size" gift became the largest private donation in the history of Harvard, second to Gerard L. Chan, director of the Morningside Foundation, when he donated more than \$350 million in 2014 to further scientific research and scholarship at the Harvard University's Gerard L. Chan School of Public Health. Similarly, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation made a gift of approximately \$113 million at UC Berkeley to establish 100 endowed faculty chairs in 2007 (Thelin & Trollinger, 2014). Comparatively, the Rockefeller Foundation gave \$45-million in the 1920s to improve medical-school education while the Ford Foundation helped to create the discipline of area studies with \$270-million in grants it made during the 1950s and 1960s (Gose, 2013). In other words, large-scale philanthropic organizations and private donors have significantly enhanced the quality of research units (i.e., schools, departments, research centers), improved undergraduate curriculum (i.e., teaching and learning, core curriculum), and reformed professional and graduate education such as completion, productivity, and technology.

Today, approximately 72,000 foundations exist in the United States, of which more than half of community foundations (i.e., Boston Foundation, College for All Texans Foundation) and corporate foundations (i.e., Spencer Foundation, Ford Foundation) were formally established to support higher education reforms in the past thirty years (Thelin & Trollinger, 2014). For example, since 2006, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the country's largest philanthropy with more \$36-billion in assets, has spent more than \$472-million to remake U.S. higher education in hopes of pushing more students, more quickly, toward graduation (Parry, Field, & Supiano, 2013). Specifically, the Gates Foundation, whose vision is to help re-channel the public dollars that states spent into raising college completion in an effort to lift more Americans out of poverty, has donated nearly \$17-million to Jobs for the Future and \$65-million to Next Generation Learning Challenges in hopes

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for streamlining remedial classes in community colleges for needy students. Such push has helped influence higher-education policy at the state level to a degree that is unprecedented for a private foundation. Similar to the Gates Foundation, the Lumina Foundation, the largest private foundation in the United States devoted solely to higher education, has spent more than \$250-million to support college-reform movements such as, Complete College America and Achieving the Dream, in hopes of streamlining or eliminating remedial classes and providing colleges with financial incentives to graduate more students on-time (Mangan, 2013). In a similar fashion, the Carnegie Corporation of New York donated more than \$2 million to the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) to help non-American universities build an infrastructure for raising funds that aligns with the increasing costs and declining government support for postsecondary education. Likewise, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation gave millions of dollars to support distance-education projects as well as existing distance-learning opportunities (e.g., Sloan Consortium Online Catalog) while the Mellon Foundation has made several private gifts to support online digital repositories (i.e., JSTOR, Project MUSE) and massive online courses (MOOCs) to disseminate new knowledge or ideas in American society (Bernstein, 2013). In other words, large-scale philanthropic foundations are increasingly supporting new innovation and ideas in higher education while also being the magnet for generous support from alumni, individuals, foundations, and corporations. While large-scale philanthropic foundations have often provided stable and unrestricted funds to support scientific research (i.e., research grants), faculty development (i.e., teaching and research), academic programs (i.e., new curricular) and scholarships (e.g., Gates Millennium Scholars Program) since the great recession of 2008, limited research have yet to examine the public purpose and value of philanthropy research in higher education (Proper & Caboni, 2014). Furthermore, numerous past assessments on the role of philanthropy in shaping U.S. higher education institutions have either been replicated from past research or highly focused on best practice (Worth, 2002). As a result, new formal research that bridge theory and practice is vastly needed to understand the effects of giving on institutional types such as, Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), religious institutions and community colleges, as well as specific units within institutions such as, giving to athletic programs, in the emerging field of higher education philanthropy (Drezner & Huehls, 2014).

Just as Merle Curti (1958) first defined philanthropy as the “love of man, charity, benevolence, humanitarianism, social reform,” new formal research that investigates the role of philanthropy in academe is crucially needed to understand how private gifts foster systematic change and promote “catalytic” or “strategic” reforms in higher education. Robert Bremner (1988) once emphasized that “The aim of philanthropy in its broadest sense is improvement in the quality of human life” (p. 3) Similarly,

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Ellen Condliffe Lagemann (2002) once stated that American philanthropy represents “a long tradition of...efforts to establish the values, shape the beliefs, and define the behaviors that would join people to one another” (p. 103). Consequently, new formal research that assess the fundraisers ability (or inability) to secure large-scale philanthropic gifts in higher education is vastly needed to understand the role of fundraising professionals (e.g., board of trustees, the president, development officers, treasurers, financial agents) in shaping the evolution of colleges and universities across the United States and abroad.

THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS: PAST AND PRESENT

Traditionally, the partnership between foundation and higher education has made possible an excellent system of higher learning in the United States (Thelin & Trollingier, 2014). Such tradition has helped board of trustees, the president, and development professionals to bring incredible resources and wealth to higher education organizations across the United States and abroad. Today, fundraising professionals have played an incalculable role in the fundraising efforts for the university as private major donors, and a prominent force in the emergence and transformation of the modern American university (Carbone, 1986; Hall, 1992; Caboni, 2010). In addition to fundraisers, development professionals communicate with many constituents (i.e., gift planning, gifts processing, research prospects) and units (i.e., development, alumni affairs, external relations) within their academic environment to enhance institutional performance and prestige in higher education. Resource dependency theory is based on this notion that institutional effectiveness and efficiency depends on the leaders’ (e.g., board members, presidents, provosts, deans, chairs) capacity to secure financial resources needed for higher education (Drezner & Huehls, 2014). As colleges and universities are grappling with a philanthropic agenda, both financially and politically, fundraising professionals are highly dependent on large-scale philanthropic organizations and private donors to sustain and transform American higher education against the growing state disinvestment for postsecondary education.

Resource Dependence Theory (RDT) and Academic Organizations

Generally, the concept of resource dependence theory (RDT) is based on the premise that educational organizations are highly dependent on resources from outside sources (e.g., state, professions, donors) as a result of resource scarcity and conflicts in today’s global economy (Pfeffer & Salanicik, 1978; Sherer & Lee, 2002).

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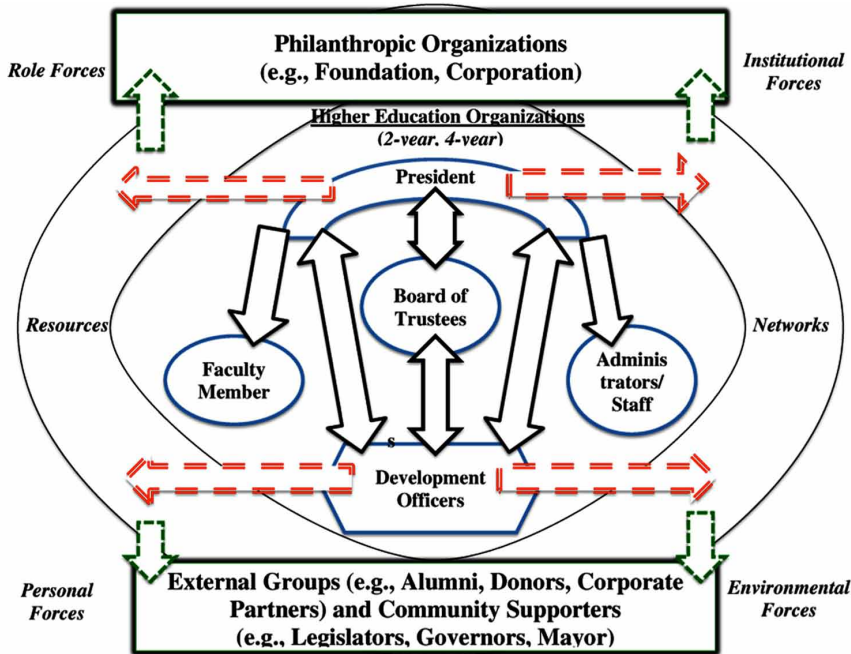
Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salanick (1978) are perhaps the two main theorists who developed the lens of RDT to explain the behavior, structure, stability, and change of academic organizations. They argue that in complex environments, academic organizations are highly dependent upon members of its environment as a result of competition and efficiency. As higher education institutions seek to acquire resources that are “self-sustaining” or sustainable, leaders of higher education (e.g., trustees, president, development professionals) are required to maximize their autonomy (e.g., freedom to make decisions) and legitimacy (i.e., influence) from outside groups to ensure short-term and long-term survivability (Scott & Davis, 2007; Thompson, 1967). This is highly evident in many U.S. colleges and universities, whereby boards of institutions seek financial resources from their external partners (e.g., alumni, donors, community partners, corporate partners) and community supporters (e.g., state legislators, governors, mayor) to achieve organizational survival and success. Organizations are in constant interaction with other entities. For example, in March 2014, the Board of Regents for Higher Education at Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (ConSCU) applied for a \$500,000 grant from the Kresge Foundation to establish “student success center” programs at several community colleges in Connecticut, with the long-term goal of helping low-income minority students persist and transfer into a four-year bachelor’s degree program (ConSCU, 2014). Similarly, in October 2014, the Boston based organization Let’s Get Ready received a \$1.1 million grant from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation to continue helping more than 8,700 low-income students enter and complete a college education (Let’s Get Ready, 2014). Comparatively, the famous Koch brothers’ – Charlie G. and David H. – donated more \$12.7 million to colleges and universities in 2012, funding initiatives such as programs as the “moral imperatives of free markets and individual liberty” (Levinthal, 2014). In other words, members who work in academic and/or large-scale philanthropic organizations are expected to build mutual relationships with outside groups in order to secure financial resources or inputs for low-income, ethnic minority, and first-generation college students to complete higher education. These independent actors may consist of suppliers, customers, and human resources.

Figure 1 presents a conceptual model designed by the author to explain the interdependencies between fundraising professionals in higher education organizations and their dependence on large-scale philanthropic organizations and external groups/community supporters.

In Figure 1, Roy Y. Chan’s conceptual framework in the context of RDT portrays how professional fundraisers (e.g., board of trustees, the president, development officers) are highly dependent with their external environments in order to survive and grow as academic organizations. Specifically, leaders of higher education must establish cooperative arrangements with philanthropic organizations (e.g., foundations, corporations), external groups, and/or community supporters to acquire the

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Figure 1. Conceptual model for research in higher education philanthropy: inter-organizational relations between higher education organizations and private funders in the context of Resource Dependency Theory (RDT)



necessary resources for innovation and growth within its organization and field levels. As colleges and universities are becoming resource-insufficient as a result of environmental uncertainty and ambiguous goals, fundraising professionals are tempted give up power and control within their external environments in hopes of securing valuable resources (e.g., financial, physical, natural, information) and networks (i.e., linkage) they need for institutional survivability (i.e., myth-making). Though Chan's conceptual model does not explain the effects of environments on colleges and universities, the conceptual model does highlight four critical forces that impact professional fundraisers in higher education: 1) personal forces, 2) role forces, 3) institutional forces, and 4) environmental forces (Cook & Lasher, 1996)

Firstly, fundraising professionals (e.g., board of trustees, alumni and public relations, development officers) are highly influenced by the president or chancellor of a college or university. Notably, fundraising professionals must work with the president to interpret the educational environment of his or her institution. Because every president or chancellor brings in wide wealth of knowledge and expertise to each college or university, fundraising professionals must align their fundraising

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practice and strategy with the president traits, habits, preferences, attitudes, values, and beliefs if they are to remain successful in attracting large philanthropic gifts to the university (Cook & Lasher, 1996). That is, the president's vision and leadership style will largely influence the decision-making process of professional fundraisers, of which, in turn affects their ability to attract resources and networks from large-scale philanthropic organizations and external groups/community supporters.

Secondly, fundraising professionals are influenced by the president's expected role to raise great sums of money for the college or university (i.e., role forces). Notably, the president must take the lead role in defining and articulating the institution's mission and priorities. Because the president is the most 'powerful' position in the college or university, the president's relationship with development staff and board of trustees is pivotal to the success of obtaining major gifts from large-scale philanthropic organizations and external groups. That is, the ability of a president to secure major gifts, for example, can be influenced by the interests of trustees, the community, and the faculty. To prevent this ordeal, the president must provide administrative leadership and support to advancement professionals. Any decision the president makes within the academic structures of higher education may affect fundraisers ability to attract resources and networks to the institution. Consequently, the president must be a team player by balancing competing needs and special interests within the institution.

Thirdly, the institutional forces that shape modern colleges and universities in the 21st century influence fundraising professionals. This includes established traditions, history, culture, norms, sanctions, taboos, rituals, rewards, and other aspects of organizational life (Cook & Lasher, 1996). Because every higher education operates differently with regards to institutional type (private, public, for-profit) and population (2-year, 4-year, online), fundraising professionals must understand the histories, traditions, and governance structures of their institution prior to making any solicitation for major gifts (or transformational gifts) to the university. That is, the quality of the governing board, student body, faculty, and alumni along with size and prestige has a direct influence on fundraising performance by the president, board of trustees, and development professionals. As higher education organizations becomes more complex and dynamic within its organization and field level, professional fundraisers must make decisions that align with the institutional goals and mission of the university without compromising the history and culture of the institution.

Fourthly, and lastly, the environmental forces that shape modern colleges and universities in the 21st century influence fundraising professionals. This includes inflation rate, underemployment, state of the economy, as well as public attitude toward higher education (Cook & Lasher, 1996). Because the environment affects the organizational structure and behavior of institutional advancement, fundraising

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professionals must utilize their practical skills and experience to support and enhance the fundraising activity of trustees and the president through collaboration. Generally, collaboration and cooperation with different constituents and units can provide teambuilding opportunities and sustain regular communication between fundraising professionals and external groups. Notably, the role of collaboration may assist fundraising professionals to embed communication structures within their external environments that are critical in securing major gifts from elite philanthropists. That is, for an institution realize its fundraising potential, colleges and universities must establish inter-organizational cooperation within their external environments to deal with economic rationality (i.e., donor's behavior, donor-oriented attitudes) of large-scale philanthropic organizations (March & Simon, 1958). Furthermore, fundraising professionals must develop a "three-party relationship" between institutional players – the board of trustees, the president, development professionals – to ensure that the institution comply with fundraising requirements to the university, reflecting institutional theory (Kinnison & Ferin, 1989).

Nevertheless, while some areas of responsibility are and should remain exclusive to the board, the president, or the development staff, all four types of forces exert differing levels of influence on fundraising professionals and thus affect board of trustees and development professionals decision-making process in varying degrees (Cook & Lasher, 1996). Though Figure I do not examine the effects of environments on the organizational structures of institutional advancement, the conceptual framework paints the importance of how "partnership roles" can help support and sustain the mission and priorities of the institution. If fundraising professionals seeks to survive in the globally competitive marketplace, then they must support one another's effort through a collaborative partnership and involve others personally in the fundraising process to the university. Moreover, professional fundraisers must understand the interaction and power/dependence relationship between the university and philanthropic organizations or external groups in shaping government expectations and public responses to higher education philanthropy.

Institutional Theory and Academic Organizations

The institutional theory of organizations as a theoretical framework is practical to explain the barriers to diversity, responsiveness, and improvement in higher education. Notably, the concept of institutional theory (e.g., political, legal, social), often described as new institutionalism, is critical to understand how institutional environments affect the organizational structures and resource flows to higher education, and how they conform to similar cultural norms and values of higher education organizations in response to environmental uncertainty, unclear technologies, and/or ambiguous goals (March & Cohen, 1974; Sills, 1957; Tolbert, 1985).

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Furthermore, institutional theory is useful for teacher-scholars and practitioners to explain why organizations such as institutional advancement change in structures and practices (e.g., fundraising activities, social events), and to explain the wider social and cultural environment as the ground in which organizations are rooted (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 1995).

Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell (1983) are perhaps the two main theorists who developed the concept of institutional theory, who argue that institutional theory is useful to understand the relationship between academic organizations and environments, and how educational organizations adopt symbol-like elements rather than acting rationally as a result to competitive external markets and social expectations (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Generally, academic organizations change in structure, practice, and behavior as a result of homogenization (i.e., isomorphism) (Sporn, 1999). Homogenization in the context of higher education occurs when institutions resemble each other (i.e., alike) in respect to buildings, classroom design, instruction and curriculum, and other similar forms. Typically, organization of higher education engage in homogenization activity because they face intense competition (e.g., goals, priorities) and efficiency (e.g., performance, outcomes) among capitalist firms (or competitive market) to conform to social rules and cultural pressures held by individuals and other organizations that are acceptable and legitimate. For example, fundraising professionals at Penn State University may recruit new board of trustees to their institution in hopes of legitimizing the university due to intense competition for major gifts at both the organizational and field levels. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) define organizational field as “those organizations which, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resources and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products” (p. 148). Because fundraising professionals often compete for several goals or priorities (i.e., power imbalance) with other institutions, the concept of institutional theory is useful to explain why board of trustees, the president, and advancement professional engage in similar activities, practices, and behaviors between constituents to achieve organizational success and survival in higher education (Miller-Millesen, 2003).

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS AND HIGHER EDUCATION PHILANTHROPY

Defining Institutional Isomorphism

Historically, Weber (1978) argued that the marketplace forces academic organizations to be isomorphic in nature because they must model themselves after other

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educational organizations they see as being successful or prestigious (e.g., research universities). To clarify, DiMaggio and Powell (1991) defined isomorphism as “a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions” (p. 66). Specifically, Hannan and Freeman (1977) argued that isomorphism is the result of individuals and groups responding to different behaviors and structures of organizations that is identified as elite or prestigious. Generally, once the field is established within an institution, there is an inexorable push towards similarity (i.e., alike) rather than innovation as a result of activities or events enacted within the administrative and academic units. For example, David Riesman (1956), the first eminent scholar to examine the concept of institutional isomorphism, noticed that many institutions replicated university course catalogues from other institutions to meet both social and societal expectations of university course offerings. Similarly, Drezner and Huehls (2014) observed that board members borrowed fundraising programs (e.g., billion-dollar campaigns, annual fund programs) and stewardship programs (e.g., legacy society, president’s club) from other universities in order to strive and attract wealthy philanthropists for institutional prestige within the academic hierarchy (i.e., symbolic capital) (O’Meara, 2007). Such trend has led fundraising professionals to pursue higher level of complexity (e.g., new offices, new units), formalization (e.g., new policies, new rules), and centralization (e.g., authority, power) within higher education to meet the growing isomorphic pulls from local and global organization fields that are perceived to be elite (Suchman, 1995).

Types of Isomorphism in Higher Education

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified three mechanisms through which institutional isomorphic conformity occurs: 1) coercive, 2) mimetic, and 3) normative. Firstly, *coercive* isomorphism stems from political influence and the problem of legitimacy (e.g., image-building). Notably, academic organizations have high degree of legitimacy, in which the actions of the institution are appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, and beliefs (Suchman, 1995). American colleges and universities are subject to institutionalization because government agencies or other political organizations (e.g., coercive sources) use sanctions or mandates to get academic organizations to adapt to specific structural arrangements (Tolbert & Hall, 2008). Typically, institutionalization occurs when fundraising professionals perform similar behaviors (e.g., self-assessment practices), structure (e.g., advisory committees) and/or processes (e.g., *Robert’s Rules of Order*) (Miller-Millesen, 2003). For example, a university president may enforce a new regulation and policy on donor intent or incentive based compensation that prompt advancement professionals to conform to the new mandate that aligns closely with other institutional advance-

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ment. Similarly, organizations of higher education, such as Office of Admissions or Office of Student Affairs may hire affirmative action officers to prevent allegations of discrimination from other individuals or institutions. Comparatively, medical hospitals across the U.S. may adopt new Ebola prevention protocols according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines to prevent an Ebola crisis in the U.S. In other words, *coercive* isomorphism results from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations or individuals, and by cultural expectations in the society with which organizations function (DiMaggio & Powell, 2012). These pressures, in turn, become institutionalized where academic organizations create structures and hierarchies to gain normative acceptance as an institution. Thus, organizations of higher education such as institutional advancement or development office would become increasingly homogeneous in structure, climate, and behavior with other institutions in hopes of attracting larger philanthropic gifts (i.e., coercive authority) from more hierarchical organized donor organizations (e.g., Andrew Carnegie Corporation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Lumina Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation).

Secondly, educational organizations serve as a model for others to *mimetic* or imitate. Notably, symbolic uncertainty is a powerful force that encourages *mimetic* isomorphism. Often known as modeling, organizations mimic after similar organizations because of the high degree of uncertainty surrounding education technologies such as “best practices” or learning outcomes (Meyer & Rowan, 1978). Because organizations of higher education often create goals that are highly disputed (Birnbau, 1988), academic organization such as university advancement may model themselves with other similar institution in order to conform to the social pressure of other elite institutions (Meyer & Scott, 1983). For example, the University of Pennsylvania may model, observe, and imitate the standardization of Columbia University online giving days (i.e., one day fundraising challenge) prior to launching their own online giving day at their institution. Similarly, several large-scale organized philanthropic organizations such as Pew Charitable Trust and Kellogg Foundation may fund several higher education research institutes (i.e., Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), Center for Policy Studies in Higher Education, New America Foundation) in order to broaden access and completion for higher education in American society. Comparatively, Boston College’s Office of Institutional Advancement may model, observe, and imitate the standardization of University of Notre Dame billion-dollar capital campaign prior to launching their billion-dollar capital campaign on-campus. Such *mimetic* behavior would help Boston College fundraising professionals identify the success and/or problematic issues that occurred during University of Notre Dame billion-dollar capital campaign with little risk or expense. Furthermore, Boston College reliance on an established, legitimated organization like Notre Dame would enhance their institutional legitimacy and survival

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characteristics while at the same time, minimize conflict over organizational goals between constituencies (e.g., donor relations, gift coordinators). In other words, organizations of higher education are highly dependent on the organizational structure of other institutions in order to achieve institutional legitimacy (e.g., university-based training programs, professional networks of organizations) and survival. In addition, fundraising professionals are more likely to seek new structures within their organization and field levels that are perceived to be legitimate in hopes of reducing uncertainty in times of constraint and support to higher education.

The last mechanism of institutional isomorphic change is *normative* pressures. *Normative* isomorphism is common when academic organizations such as institutional advancement staff advocate for certain organizational rules (e.g., gift arrangement procedures, principles of stewardship) and structures (i.e., professionalization) in order to become more institutionalized (e.g., status, power) (Terlaak, 2007). Generally, the concept of organizational rules is defined as “the routines and procedures around which human behaviors and rewards in an organization are defined” (Youn & Price, 2009, p. 208). In other words, rituals and rules (i.e., cultural, cognitive, normative, regulative) explain cumulative experience as well as actions of formal organizations in shaping the development of structural inertia (i.e., resistance) and institutional change (Allison, 1971; Cohen & Sproul, 1996; March et al., 2000). Once an organization occupies a “niche” (i.e., behavior), it will move toward the state of structural inertia by formulating new rules and routines for long-term survivability and effectiveness as a result of a competitive market, external pressures, or efficiency (Scott, 2001). While rules may maintain a sense of stability within an organization, structural inertia can inhibit organizational adaptability in times of great ecological change (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). This is highly evident in the context of higher education philanthropy, where fundraising professionals create new rules, rituals and procedures (e.g., donor-recognition policy, principles for corporate donations) to maintain a sense of stability and survivability. Furthermore, in-house advancement offices often incorporate widely held myths about fundraising activities by adhering to institutional scripts (e.g., hiring certified fundraisers) and ideals as a result of the professionalization (i.e., professional-organizational relations) of fundraising (Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Scott, 2001; Tempel, Seiler, & Adrich, 2010).

Today, higher education fundraising is now regarded as a profession in which professional fundraisers specializes in annual giving, foundation relations, corporate giving, planned giving, major gifts, or campaign fundraising (Proper & Caboni, 2014). The rise of professionalization for fundraising within the college setting has forced several higher education constituents to define their area of specialization of which, in turn, prompt fundraising professionals to define the conditions of their workplace environment, and to establish legitimation for their occupational autonomy (Larson, 1977; Collins, 1979). Tolbert and Hall (2008) define professionalization

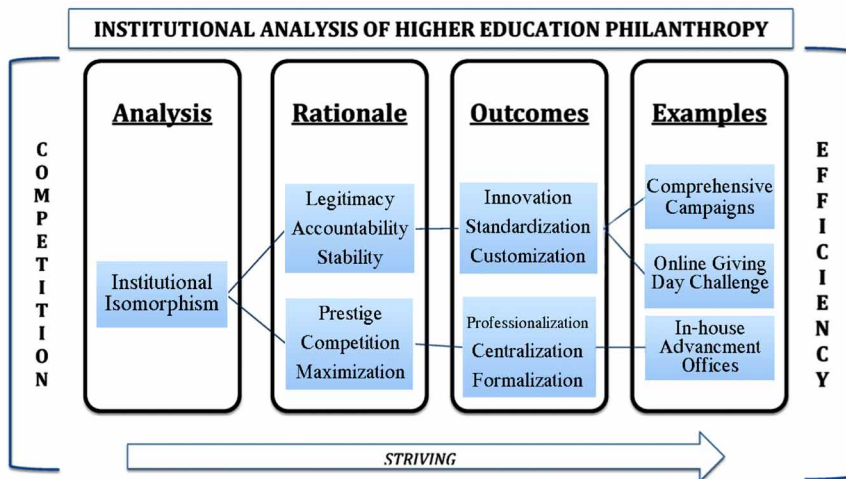
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as “the formalization and conditions under which resistance to formalization occur in organizations” (p. 36). For example, the vice-president for institutional advancement at Boston College may hire a professional consulting firm, such as Grenzebach Glier & Associates, Marts & Lundy, or Ayers & Associates, Inc. (i.e., filtering of personnel) to enhance or change administrator roles due to possible compromise or conflict between constituencies (e.g., coordinators, managers, regulators). Similarly, development offices at Boston College may require their peers to attend professional seminars and workshops organized by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) as a result of intense competition among elite colleges and universities in the United States. Because competition has caused colleges and universities to become more alike instead of distinctive, leaders of higher education must recruit several managers (e.g., director of gift planning, director of development) and specialized staff members (e.g., major gifts coordinator, assistant director of athletic development) to assist current newcomers and career changers with new fundraising responsibilities being placed for the welfare of both donors and institutions (Caboni, 2012). In other words, the professionalization of fundraising may serve to reinforce and act as an isomorphic force of socialization (i.e., standard methods of practice, normative rules about appropriate behavior), of which, in turn, prompt fundraising professionals to a commonly recognized hierarchy of status (i.e., formal and informal means) that is driven by status competition and institutional prestige (i.e., organizational identity). Ultimately, such *normative* pressure would foster homogenization in structure, process, and behavior of formal organizations as colleges and universities not only compete to provide the same benefits, services, and rewards for private donors and elite philanthropists but also because they would be defined as legitimate only if they can offer everything similar to what other institutions of higher education offers in modern society. To help visualize institutional theory in the context of higher education philanthropy, Figure 2 present a conceptual framework developed by the author in conceptualizing institutional isomorphism in higher education.

In Figure 2, Roy Y. Chan’s conceptual model illustrates that fundraising professionals within the contexts of resource allocation, donor engagement, and fundraising are making decisions that foster or exhibit isomorphism on campus. Notably, fundraising professionals are striving for power and control within their external environments as a result of intense competition for elite philanthropists (i.e., power/dependence relationship). O’Meara (2007) defines striving “as the pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy” (p. 122). That is, the decision to strive for prestige prompts fundraising professionals to be conformist with institutional rules, rituals, and routines, and the prospective of major donors rights (i.e., *Donor Bill of Rights*) (Caboni, 2010).

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Figure 2. Conceptual model for research in higher education philanthropy: academic environments in the context of institutional theory



To enumerate, Figure 2 illustrates the role of institutional isomorphism in facilitating legitimacy, prestige, and stability have led to the intense competition for major donors in both the organization and field levels. Notably, competition and imitation have led to burgeoning staff, whereby professional fundraisers compete for efficiency and effectiveness in terms of the total dollars raised in higher education by customizing and standardizing their reward programs and structures that caters to the needs and interests of private donors. For example, Boston College may create comprehensive capital campaigns similar to the University of Notre Dame to generate the funds needed for capital improvements and endowment growth such as, new educational technologies in the classroom, libraries, and beyond the physical campus. Such process often requires a development professional that is multi-skilled (or “curious chameleons”), whereby in-house advancement professionals develop activities such as comprehensive capital campaigns and online giving day challenge that are personalized to the individual and/or organization interests. As many colleges and universities now have established offices of institutional advancement across the United States, leaders of university advancement must develop programs and activities that are creative and innovative to the core mission and identity of the institution. Furthermore, fundraising professionals must go beyond merely adopting the techniques of “best practice” if they are to increase institutional performance and efficiency that reflects the core needs of institution. While most activities and

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programs now require broad-based participation in both the local and national level, the campaign is likely to remain as the core element of higher education philanthropy because it provides people an unequalled opportunity to respond to specific goals and deadlines in an organized fashion.

Nonetheless, applying a theoretical lens of isomorphism may assist teacher-scholars and advanced practitioners to understand fundraisers decision-making process and their actual behavior to comprehensive capital campaigns in higher education. Furthermore, integrating a theoretical construct of isomorphism may assist leaders to better understand donor's intent to support colleges and universities through normative and social elements (e.g., conformity, isomorphism, loose-coupling) as well as the symbolic aspects of marketization than solely on self-interest. As institutional advancement offices develop more sophisticated and elaborate comprehensive campaigns, with top research universities often competing within their peer group for campaign dollars, fundraising professionals must *appear* legitimate and prestigious (i.e., logic of confidence) within the inter-organizational network in hopes of mobilizing additional funding from large-scale philanthropic organizations and external groups (Proper & Caboni, 2014). Nevertheless, the role of the board of trustees, the president, and development professionals in securing major resources and philanthropic gifts within the organization and field level is the result of coercive (state bodies), imitative (other organizations), and normative (professionals) conformity to institutional rule, institutional isomorphism, and normatively based decision making in higher education (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2010).

CONCLUSION

In essence, the potential for organizational theory such as, resource dependence theory (RDT) and new institutionalism, in contributing to research on higher education philanthropy is enormous. This chapter introduces and proposes teacher-scholars and advanced practitioners to utilize organizational analysis to understand the role of philanthropy in shaping major structural and formal changes to the field of higher education administration, such as gift management, endowment management, and institutional mission. Applying a theoretical construct would help colleges and universities make sense of the complex relationship between academic organizations and a set of actors in their technical environment (e.g., donor's demands, donor's rights), as well as the effects of their civic and social environment on legitimizing the work with external partners. As colleges and universities become highly homogeneous or isomorphic in nature as a result of institutionalization (e.g., inter-organizational arrangements, behavior dynamics of actors), teachers-scholars and advanced practitioners should apply resource dependence theory (RDT) and institutional theory

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along with other organizational theories – agency theory, contingency theory, network theory, control theory - to help answer the many unanswered research agenda in higher education philanthropy such as, donor intent and the effect of time on the relationship of donors; the effect of giving on institutional mission in shaping the ways campuses become involved with their communities; the engagement of non-traditional donors at historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs); and/or the relationship between tuition price and state subsidies to philanthropy (Bernstein, 2013). Needless to say, there is some excellent work being done in historical research, particularly as regards to the role of leadership in fundraising for colleges and universities. However, as editor-in-chief Scott L. Thomas of *The Journal of Higher Education* once noted, “During my four years as editor, I have yet to receive a well-developed manuscript on the role of philanthropy in academe.” Consequently, new formal research that utilizes interpretive frameworks in philanthropy research will yield better studies on linking leadership to fundraising performance and functioning in higher education. Charles Keidan (2014) once stated, “Philanthropy’s imprint on the fabric of university life is just emerging. As its profile rises, we should expect some celebration of its contribution to higher education – but we are also entitled to demand more rigorous and robust scholarship about its role in society.” Subsequently, a thorough understanding of organizational theories is relevant for teacher-scholars and development professionals in conceptualizing how philanthropic organizations operate and how funding patterns influence academic organizations in the era of the knowledge economy and globalization. The future of philanthropy research will lie upon grounded theory method and case study research data from teacher-scholars and advanced practitioners if we seek to understand how funding has shaped the evolution of research universities in the evolving field of philanthropy and fundraising in American higher education (Drezner, 2013).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to kindly acknowledge Dr. Ted I. K. Youn, Dr. Joseph P. Zolner, Dr. Noah D. Drezner, Dr. Frances Huehls, Dr. Brad Weiner, and Madelyn Bell for providing substantial feedback and comments in this paper.

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Morgan Clevenger, having worked more than two decades in fundraising and philanthropy in higher education, understands the importance of all facets in a

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development office, quality programs, academic standards and teaching methodologies, networking, and research. He has held various fundraising, administrative, teaching, and marketing positions, and is currently an Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship at Wilkes University, and was nominated as Outstanding New Faculty in 2015. He researches, writes, and presents widely on issues of corporate citizenship, philanthropy, higher education, nonprofit management, ethics, and entrepreneurship. He attained a BS in journalism in 1991 and an MBA in 1996, both from West Virginia University. He achieved Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) status in 1997 recognizing his tenure, success, and professionalism in fundraising, marketing, and public relations. In 2014 he completed an EdD from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and his dissertation—*An Organizational Analysis of the Inter-organizational Relationships Between A Public American Higher Education University and Six United States Corporate Supporter: An Instrumental, Ethnographic Case Study Using Cone's Corporate Citizenship Spectrum*—was nominated for 10 awards across multiple disciplines.

Lauren E. B. Dodge is a Ph.D. candidate in Higher Education Administration in the department of Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests are in philanthropic behavior and fundraiser performance and evaluation. She is a strategic, thoughtful, outcomes-focused leader with training in information science and program evaluation.

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Leigh Hersey joined the faculty of the Division of Public and Nonprofit Administration in August 2009. She brings more than a dozen years of nonprofit fundraising experience, including four years with Arizona State University. In her last fundraising position, she initiated the Twitter account that celebrated the organization's 10 year anniversary. She continues building on her experience through her research on philanthropy. In addition to working there, Dr. Hersey received her PhD in Public Administration from Arizona State University with a graduate certificate in Nonprofit Leadership & Management. Her fundraising experience provides the foundation for her continuing research in philanthropy.

About the Contributors

Rick Jakeman's research and scholarly interests focus on college student experiences, including graduate student socialization and undergraduate student alcohol and other drug use. Specifically, his research focuses on socialization of graduate students while in academic environments, including elasticity of peer relationships, student perceptions of diversity and inclusion in the curriculum, and implications for faculty practice. He also studies undergraduate student experiences in campus parties and drinking, problem behaviors with alcohol and other drugs, and peer intervention and training as an institutional policy response. He has authored articles for the *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and *Online Classroom*. Dr. Jakeman has seven years of professional experience in the field of student affairs, having worked in the fields of leadership development, service learning, academic advising, and residence life.

Fabrice Jaumont serves as Program Officer for the FACE Foundation in New York, and as Education Attaché for the Embassy of France to the United States. With a Ph.D. in International Education from New York University's Steinhardt School of Education, Culture and Human Development, his research finds itself at the intersection of comparative and international education, international development, cultural diplomacy, and philanthropy. His doctoral research focused on the role of U.S. private foundations in the development of higher education in Africa. His primary area of research is international development education; he came to it and continues to complement his work with his extensive expertise in heritage language education, community development, and access to knowledge for all. His involvement with various linguistic communities in North America and Europe has led him to publish several articles and book chapters on the topics of language maintenance and education development at all levels.

Sabith Khan is a Ph.D Candidate at Virginia Tech researching American Muslim philanthropy.

Cynthia J. MacGregor, EdD, is a professor in the Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education department at Missouri State University and serves as the site coordinator for the regional portion of a statewide EdD program in educational leadership offered through the University of Missouri. She earned Bachelor of Science and Master's degrees in psychology from Central Missouri State University, and her doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Missouri. Her professional employment has included Drury University, Burrell Mental Health Center, Missouri State University, and the University of Missouri in a variety of faculty, mental health, and student support roles. Her background in psychology and

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adult education brings a non-native perspective to the challenges of PK-20 education. Her unique vantage point, combined with her pragmatic worldview, allows her to see vexing problems within education and propose novel and systemic solutions.

Cathleen Ruch, Ed.D., is currently on staff at Lake Region State College- Dakota Precision Ag Center, as the Grants and Operations Administrator. She comes with experience with grants and administration at the System level, where she was the Grant Developer at the North Dakota University System.

Andrew Shafer brings diversity from the field into this publication with experience in non-profit management and higher education advancement. Starting his career with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Shafer then moved into work in higher education. His positions have been at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and at Purdue University in both Alumni Relations and Development. Currently, he serves as Vice President for Advancement at Aquinas College in Nashville, TN. In his current role, Shafer is re-building the institution's entire advancement operation to include alumni relations, development, advancement services, marketing, and communications. Putting this expertise together into a package that can be meaningful and helpful to students of all backgrounds is his passion. Impacting the power of philanthropy is his goal. Shafer also serves as Adjunct Faculty with The School of Professional Studies and The Heyman Center for Philanthropy at New York University and for the School of Business and Nonprofit Management at North Park University, Chicago. Shafer earned both his Bachelor of Arts in Communications and his Masters in Public Administration from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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Published in the United States of America by
Information Science Reference (an imprint of IGI Global)
701 E. Chocolate Avenue
Hershey PA 17033
Tel: 717-533-8845
Fax: 717-533-8661
E-mail: cust@igi-global.com
Web site: <http://www.igi-global.com>

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Alphin, Henry C., Jr., 1977-

Title: Facilitating higher education growth through fundraising and philanthropy / Henry C. Alphin Jr., Jennie Lavine, Storny Stark, and Adam Hocker, editors.

Description: Hershey, PA : Information Science Reference, 2016. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015037567 | ISBN 9781466696648 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781466696655 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Education, Higher--Finance. | Universities and colleges--Finance. | Educational fund raising. | Charitable uses, trusts, and foundations.

Classification: LCC LB2341.98 .F34 2016 | DDC 378.1/06--dc23 LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015037567>

This book is published in the IGI Global book series Advances in Educational Marketing, Administration, and Leadership (AEMAL) (ISSN: 2326-9022; eISSN: 2326-9030)

British Cataloguing in Publication Data

A Cataloguing in Publication record for this book is available from the British Library.

All work contributed to this book is new, previously-unpublished material. The views expressed in this book are those of the authors, but not necessarily of the publisher.

Facilitating Higher Education Growth through Fundraising and Philanthropy

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A volume in the Advances
in Educational Marketing,
Administration, and
Leadership (AEMAL) Book
Series

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