

NAIS Webinar – Key Trends in Fundraising

Host: Myra McGovern

- NAIS Giving Data:
 - 2024: Giving went up by 4.2%
 - 2025: Predicted that giving will go up by 3.9%
- Fundraising trends are driven by the stock market (overtime)
- Challenges –
 - Asking parents for both tuition AND giving
 - Historic inflation – cost of living is always going up
 - Communicating value and WHY
 - More families are choosing independent schools then ever before (especially true in the Seattle area)
 - How are we communicating annual fund – is this a compelling message that we are communicating well?
 - Start the conversation when families are new (Admissions)
 - This is how you create a culture of philanthropy
 - The attitude is that everyone is asked to give and it's expected
 - **Relationships – invest in your people and the aspects of your fundraising approach that help build relationships the best**
- Example of another school – they have 48% alumni giving
- DASL metrics – living alumni vs. possible askable alumni
- If you put the time and energy into stewardship, the fundraising part is easy.
- The schools who keep asking even through crises keep getting gifts post-crisis
- **The edge we have on a college is that we can be more tailored and specific to individual alumni**

How have you adapted or leveraged new approaches to fundraising?

- Volunteer management tools
- Helping volunteers manage their work
- Empowering them
- Development director needs to be front and center with donors

When you think about the future of fundraising, what makes you most excited?

- The people and how professional the industry has become – diversifying so that donors can see themselves
- CRMs – leverage technology for the health of our schools and for our donors
- Chat GPT – helps draft your thoughts and gets you to the key ideas so that you can use them
- Event based fundraising – Pros and Cons
 - School events are entrenched; can be hard to make a shift
 - People want to feel like they're getting something for their giving (galas)
 - Big lift for small staff
 - High cost for low returns
- Increased polarization – some donors choosing to withhold gifts as a power move
- DEI / whole spectrum of donors
- They show up, we show up. Caring about donors. Gentle pushback with strong relationships and trust.
- Not demonizing people that disagree with you
- Disagree by respecting humanity
- Listening skills
- The one thing NOT to do: fold

Workforce? What are the sizes of your teams?

- This is a high turnover profession
- Tips for schools seeking to build or keep strong advancement teams
- The teams really come down to the leader. They have to adapt to the changing workforce; not expecting the new hires to adapt to their way
- Wait for the better hire; interview carefully and rigorously
- Plan carefully before hiring – what will this person do?
- Building a team s. plugging holes with employees
- Do consultants benefit small teams? The jury is out...