

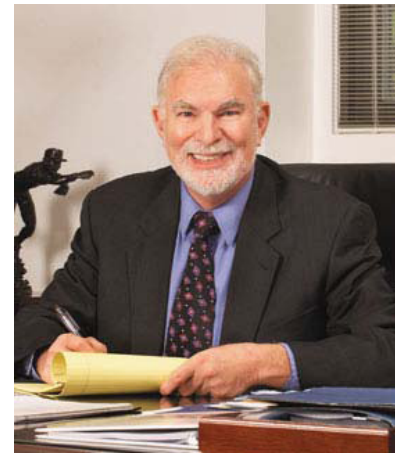
CHICOSTATE Inside

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From the President's Desk

Advancing the University

So why don't we just call it fundraising? Isn't that what "advancement" or "development" or "cultivation" or whatever other euphemism employed by higher education to describe such acquisitive activities is really all about? And even if it's simply a matter of fundraising, no matter what we call it, why is it increasingly commanding our attention and requiring more of our scarce resources, especially in public higher education? Are we not so intrinsically deserving that state support should flow undiminished and unquestioned to us, thus freeing us from the need to seek private support? Moreover, how can we effectively compete for such support against those private institutions which have long depended upon it (and huge tuitions) for their lifeblood and for which they have organized armies of development officers and foot soldiers to court donors, solicit gifts, conduct phone-a-thons, mount campaigns, and track down alumni?



President Paul J. Zingg

Although serious fundraising has been a part of the national public higher education scene for decades, it is still a somewhat new phenomenon in the CSU. Only a few years ago, in fact, did the CSU trustees articulate a systemwide fundraising policy when they declared that campuses should raise annually in private support an amount equal to at least 10 percent of their respective state General Fund allocation.

Yet, we do not need an advancement effort just because the trustees have established fundraising goals for us. Nor do we need one just because state support for public higher education in California has declined precipitously, in fact, more than 20 percent below funding levels in the 1980s. We need an advancement effort because advancement is more than fundraising. It is fundamentally about advancing the mission of the university, an activity that faculty do every day when they teach well, that staff do daily when they provide dedicated service, and that our successful alumni do regularly when they tell someone where they went to college.

The thesaurus is full of synonyms for “advance,” and it is more useful, I suggest, to look to them for guidance to explain and define an advancement effort than it is to euphemize it. You might be surprised by some of these definitions. Yes, “to promote” and “to progress” are listed. But also “to do good” and “to make better.” These are terms that emphasize improvement, signal positive momentum, and convey a sense of noble purpose. Indeed, the most successful university advancement efforts are characterized by the engagement of all members of the university community in the performance of their individual roles in such a way that the commonality and connectedness of their work are clear not only to themselves, but also to others outside the institution. In other words, institutional colleagues should know and be able to articulate what it is that binds us together in a common effort, appreciate the different roles we each have in moving the institutional agenda forward, and feel confident that we are connected in work that is good and valuable.

The external orientation, of course, is the focus of advancement offices and officers per se. But the work they do, essentially the stories they tell, flows from the efforts of others—faculty who achieve distinction as teachers and scholars, staff who serve faculty and students faithfully and effectively, students who learn, and alumni who succeed. Advancement offices do not invent or define the institutional story. They serve it and explain it and celebrate it.

As connected as advancement efforts must be to the mission and goals of the institutions they serve, they have become a critical element of an integrated, multifaceted approach to resource acquisition. Yes, the state, through the annual General Fund allocation, is the principal source of our operating capital for instruction and learning support services. The state University Fee, which our students pay, contributes the next greatest amount. Yet, these two funding sources still leave us with a very real funding gap, not only to support activities that add distinction and a margin of excellence to the university, but also to provide some basic needs. This gap must be addressed through other revenues, cost-cutting measures, and hard decisions about what we need to do and what we want to do. On some campuses, additional student fees, the result of special referenda, have helped close that gap. On most campuses, private support and revenues derived from grants and sponsored research have also helped make up the difference.

Private sector dollars, of course, are never secure or automatic, even those already in-house, as poorly performing endowment and investment pools of recent years have demonstrated. In the public arena, we have long been in an era of uncertainty and instability about funding. Each budget crisis exacerbates this situation. Moreover, we also face a more intense accountability environment that requires us to demonstrate our ability to allocate resources in terms of well-articulated priorities, to show how these priorities are clearly tied to serving the public good, and to prove that our houses are in order, both financially and administratively, to provide wise and effective stewardship of the resources we

receive.

Advancement, then, is a necessary pillar of a resource foundation that includes the state, students, and stewardship. Again, though, advancement is more than fundraising. An effective advancement operation promotes the institution and helps make the institution's case to all those who would hold us accountable for our performance. Friends appear and funds arrive when our story is compelling and when it is told well.

I will shortly be announcing some changes in the advancement structure of the university. They will focus on achieving clarification of roles and expectations between central and decentralized operations and fostering an advancement "culture" and attitude that reflects the approach to advancement, as presented above. Many of the necessary elements to accomplish this are already in place, and solid work has been accomplished across the campus and by our central advancement team in the offices of Development and Advancement Services, Alumni and Parent Relations, and Public Affairs and Publications. We can and must do more, though. There is too much at stake not to have a vibrant, comprehensive, and responsive advancement effort. For when that is the case, we have a chance to realize another definition of "advance," that is to "prosper."

—Paul J. Zingg