

Fundraising Behavior by College of Agriculture Leaders in Response to Covid-19

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Introduction

College of Agriculture (COA) leaders shoulder a multitude of expectations, including generating funding required to successfully achieve their mission (Williams, 2007). In 2019, higher education institutions (HEI) raised over \$49.6 billion in voluntary support with colleges of agriculture often securing some of the larger financial gifts (CASE, 2020). Currently, COA leaders are navigating fundraising during unique circumstances of economic uncertainty coupled with a global pandemic.

Purpose and Objectives

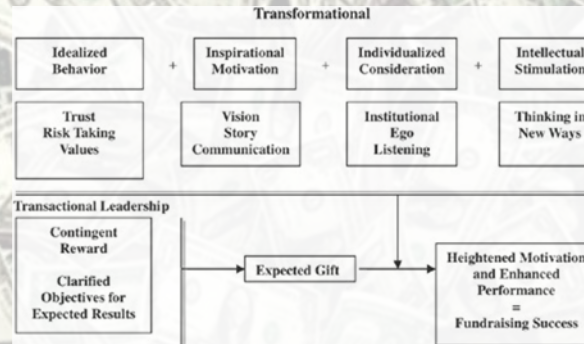
The purpose of this study was to examine academic leaders' responses to a crisis in terms of fundraising behaviors. Our research objectives were:

- 1) Determine COA deans' leadership styles during the COVID-19 pandemic
- 2) Describe COA deans' leadership fundraising behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

- COA deans utilize communication with their internal and external stakeholders as a means to engage in fundraising
- No one particular fundraising strategy, but rather a perceived implementation of storytelling
- Opportunity to explore the perceived value of developing a specific message versus simply delivering a timely message during a crisis in future studies
- COA with communications departments can assist in developing the fundraising communication for their colleges during a crisis

Conceptual Framework



The Transformative Leadership Fundraising Model (Nicholson, 2007)

References

Nicholson, W. D. (2007). Leading where it counts: An investigation of the leadership styles and behaviors that define college and University presidents as successful Fundraisers. *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, 7(4), 256-270.

Council for Advancement and Support of Education. (2020, February 5). Voluntary support of education key findings, 2018-19. <https://www.case.org/resources/voluntary-support-education-key-findings-2018-19>

Williams, J.R. (2007.) The Conceptualization of Leadership and Leadership Development by Academic Department Heads in College of Agriculture at Land Grant Institutions: A Qualitative Study [Doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University]. SHAREOK Repository.

Methods

- Phenomenological approach
- Four College of Agriculture Directors of Fundraising
- Qualitative Interviews
- Constant Comparative Coding

Results

Theme 1: COA Deans Inspire and Motivate Donors Through Storytelling

When you can draw on the emotions, especially in the agricultural realm, and this particular dean can do that, and telling good stories with our donors. They cry, and when that happens, I know I just need to add zeros (to the gift solicitation value). - Participant 2

Theme 2: COA Deans Seek Intellectual Stimulation Regarding Fundraising

... he's told me two or three times to my face 'I'm coachable... This isn't what I was born to do but it's part of the job. And so, I need you to teach me - if I'm doing different and I should change it.' - Participant 1

Theme 3: COA Deans Exhibit Idealized Behavior in Fundraising During Covid-19

- All four deans were perceived as continuing to fundraise during the pandemic
- Some shifted to stewardship, others focused on solicitations
- Regardless of their idealized behavior, all of the deans implemented their specific engagement style with donors during the pandemic