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Implementing a Strategic Parent and Family Fundraising Program

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Implementing a Strategic Parent and Family Fundraising Program

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This presentation created for the Academic Leadership Academy 2017-18



Introduction

It is no secret that state and government funding for higher education has decreased significantly over the last 10 years. Colleges and universities are challenged with finding new financial sources. Funding through privates gifts and philanthropy has become a new way of sustainability for not-for-profit colleges and universities.

Alumni, faculty/staff, and friends are constituents that provide financial support to the university. However, there is a subgroup of these people who are worth a closer look and require more engagement: parents and families of currently enrolled students.

There are many benefits to having a strategic engagement plan with parents and families as it relates to the work of university advancement. By connecting with these families early on colleges and universities create a pipeline of marketers, recruiters, donors, and allies – at no cost to them!

"Parent Fundraising" was noted as one of seven goals and directives delivered from the President to the former Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations and our team. By intentionally cultivating parents and families philanthropically we will also help move the needle on other advancement priorities, such as increase the alumni giving percentage, build a foundation and new pipeline for major gifts as we move into a capital campaign, and help model a culture of philanthropy with the student body.

This poster will outline various ways WMU's Office of Development and Alumni Relations (DevAR) can strategically engage with parents and families to increase giving. It happens in partnership and with support of the Office of Family Engagement (OFE) and the Office of Admissions.

Current State of Engagement and Fundraising

Engagement:

- Alumni Relations Outreach
 - Events
- Alumni Ambassador Program
- Homecoming and Family Weekend

 Tent at the tailgate event
- Legacy Scholarship
- Legacy ScholarshiNotification
- Recipient dinner

Fundraising:

- Annual Fund
 - Calls
 - Tributes
- Major Giving
- By chance
 - Biggest opportunity!

*WMU had a Parents Association that was operated by various units within the Division of Student Affairs from 1958 – 2006. Dues in that last year were \$35. The Parents Association was eliminated in 2006, and the Office of Family Engagement was established.

Opportunities for Enhanced Engagement

The more a family feels connected to the university, the chances of them making a philanthropic gift increases.

The University recognizes **legacy families** as students and alumni whose family, including parents, grandparents and/or siblings, attended or currently attend WMU.

- Connect with Office of Admissions to determine who in the applicant pool is a legacy. DevAR can assist with outreach specifically marketed to them or events specific to Legacy Families
- Special invitation to exclusive events on and off campus with college administrators.
- Creation of Legacy Family Award. Presented at WMU Night of Excellence; criteria will be determined in partnership with DevAR and OFE.

The **Medallion** Scholarship is most prestigious merit-based scholarship for undergraduates, with the Office of Admissions.

- Enhance DevAR presence at Medallion Mixer prior to competition.
- Host annual event with scholarship recipient, family, and donor.

WMU is home to more than 400 student athletes, Bronco Spirit and Marching Band members. DevAR can work with **Athletics** and the Bronco Fund to intentionally cultivate families of current athletes.

The **Admissions Ambassadors** program has been sending out thousands of hand-written postcards to prospective students since 2005.

 Create an additional arm of the program to include: event hosts i.e. recruitment and yield, college fair volunteers, to draft welcome letters, and be a family resource to other prospective families.

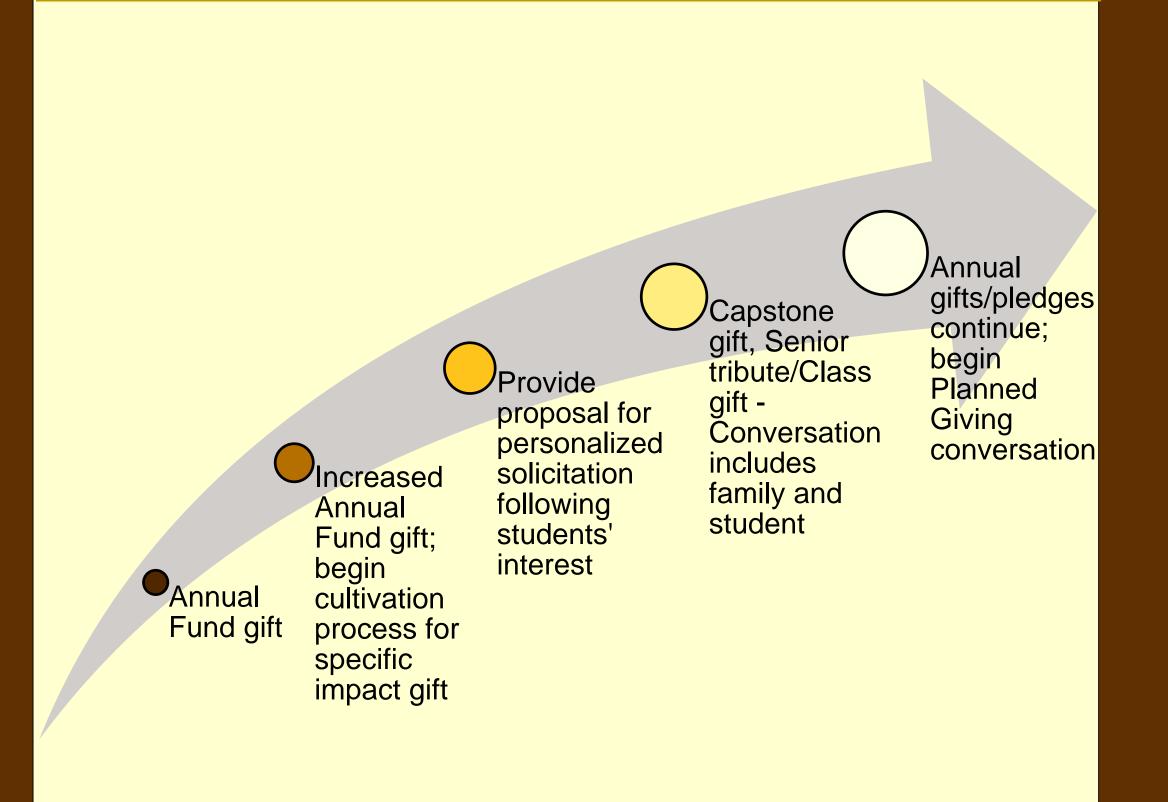




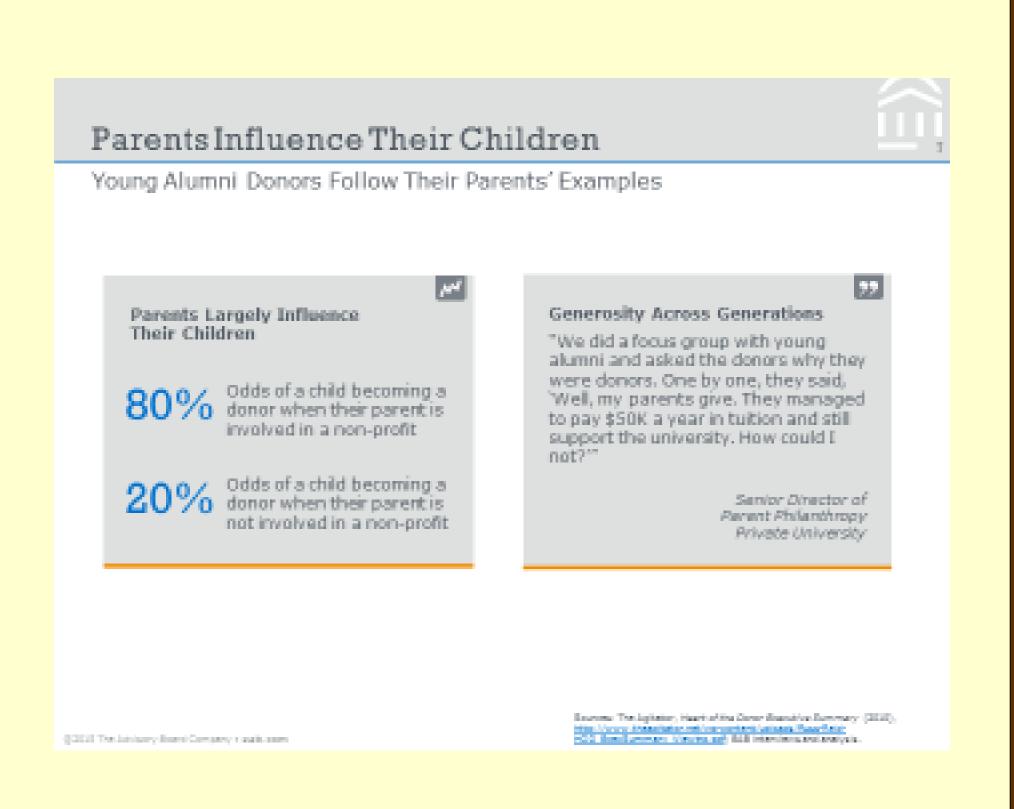
Insight Into Action

- Data get it, understand it, use it
 - Collect data on incoming families by working with campus partners
 - Contact information cards, admissions applications, FAFSA
 - Create a matrix of identifiers that would move family on to prospect research
 - Zip code, student's high school, employment, did they fill out FASFA, etc.
- Move qualified families to appropriate portfolio
 - Annual fund, Leadership Gifts, Major Gifts
- What percent of donors are families in a given Fiscal Year (FY)?
- How many families do we solicit per FY?
- How many families currently give \$1,000+ via the Annual Fund?
- O What is the median gift size?
- O What is the largest gift?

Arc of Family Giving



It's a Family Thing



Reflection

A coordinated family fundraising plan can have benefits beyond the direct dollars they give now. Ideally, the student has been part of the process and has witnessed philanthropy being modeled. According to EAB interviews and analysis, adults who watched their parents support non-profits are more likely to be active donors themselves.

So this too creates an opportunity to engage a pipeline of donors early on, students and young alumni. It would be in the university's best interest to also focus on students in their senior year and propose a class gift option.

In 2018, the graduating class of Medallion scholars were asked to make a gift to the Medallions' Medallion Fund, or any area on campus that positively impacted them, in the amount of their graduation year. It began with a soft ask during a celebration and followed up with an email and social media message on their private Facebook page. That ask yielded a 10% giving rate.

Specific, thoughtful and ongoing engagement with targeted groups of constituents will lead to more donor participation and gifts.

Contact Information

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