Original Article

Presidential transitions during capital campaigns

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ABSTRACT In the past few decades, capital campaigns at institutions of higher education have increased in duration, while collegiate presidential tenures have been doing just the opposite. Turnover in the top post was frequent, even during major fundraising campaigns. Before this study, presidential transitions during campaigns had not been previously analyzed. Therefore, the objective of this exploratory study was to better understand presidential transitions during capital campaigns from the perspective of the chief development officer (CDO) who maintained continuity. Nine CDOs, who experienced presidential transitions during campaigns were interviewed to better understand their experience. The strategies for dealing with a presidential transition during a campaign included (a) providing input in the selection of the new president; (b) communication with constituency; (c) education of the incoming president; (d) involving the new president in the campaign right away; and (e) creating new funding priorities. Recommendations for a CDO dealing with a change in leadership during a campaign have been outlined in this paper.

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INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive capital campaigns are the principal fundraising endeavors for institutions of higher education, beyond annual funds and various special events. Capital campaigns are

intense efforts to significantly build a non-profit organization's assets in a specified amount of time (Quigg, 1986; Dove, 2000; Kihlstedt, 2004; Newman, 2005). The need for capital campaigns mostly stems from reduced state support. Additional reasons for campaigns include reparation and construction of facilities, expansion and creation of programs for the campus and to bolster endowments. Cascione (2003) said that a college's

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ability to garner private funds is 'now a defining criterion of institutional prestige' and efforts to secure philanthropic dollars pervade every type of post-secondary institution (p. 3).

The dollar amount raised during a college's capital campaign varies from a few million to more than 1 billion dollar. The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) reported that the average campaign goal for all institutions was nearly US \$250 million in 2002–2003, a sharp increase from the mean goal of \$174 million in 2001 and only \$88 million in 1997. In order to raise these kinds of dollars, the same CASE report indicated that institutions of higher education engage in campaigns of 6 years or more in length. Additional research supports the idea of lengthy campaigns (for example, Quigg, 1986; Worth, 1993; Cook, 1997a; Dove, 2000; Symonds, 2004; Newman, 2005).

Leadership is a critical element of a successful fundraising program for an institution of higher education. College presidents have incredible fundraising responsibilities, especially during a capital campaign. And, because of the frequency at which campaigns are conducted, 'every president has to do a capital campaign now' (Cook, 1997a, p. 74). Some of a president's campaign tasks include serving as chief spokesperson for the fundraising goal, cultivating major gifts, working with staff, trustees and volunteers, and donating money themselves (Quigg, 1986; Essex and Ansbach, 1993; Gearhart, 1995; McLaughlin, 1996; Dove, 2000; Sturgis, 2006). The importance of a strong leader for a capital campaign cannot be overemphasized. Rooney (1999)

indicated, 'Frequently, it is the personal relationships of, and time devoted by, the key leaders in the university that actualize potential gifts, especially in the case of large gifts. The modern dean and president spend a great deal of time (some would say an inordinate amount) engaged in fundraising activities' (p. 43).

Pressure to raise funds may be a reason why most presidents do not remain in office. The average term of a college president is now 5–6 years (Fincher, 1997; Korschgen *et al*, 2001; Corrigan, 2002; Martin and Samels, 2004; Rhodes, 2005). Martin and Samels (2004) offer many reasons for shortened terms, but their lengthy report claims that the main force driving otherwise worthy presidents out of office is the pressure to raise extraordinary amounts of money: 'Presidents told us that by a factor of four or five, fundraising challenges formed the greatest pressure in their professional lives' (p. 8). The current and former presidents interviewed throughout Martin and Samels's book echo this sentiment. Vartan Gregorian, former president of Brown University, indicated, 'All universities must be in the fund-raising business *all the time*' (p. 26). This theory is especially true during fundraising campaigns of any magnitude.

Cook (1997a) reported, 'Capital campaigns often require huge commitments of time and energy from presidents and contribute to the growing stress level and rapid turnover rate associated with the position' (p. 75). In fact, former Harvard University President Neil Rudenstine took a leave of absence from his post in 1994 citing 'severe fatigue and exhaustion' due to his commitment to Harvard's \$2.6

billion drive (Bulkeley and Stecklow, 1994). President Rudenstine did return to the presidency, but he eventually resigned in 2001 as the university began deliberating another capital campaign. Presidents play a crucial and strategic role in institutional advancement, as seen in aforementioned details. When a president leaves office, institutions of higher education may lose momentum with fundraising, planning, productivity, staff morale and institutional reputation (Richter, 1995; Basinger, 2001; Gaylor, 2004).

Because the average presidential tenure is shorter than the average capital campaign, this is a topic that demands further inquiry. This study analyzed the impact of a presidential transition during a capital campaign from the perspective of the chief development officer (CDO). Richter (1995) indicated that it is generally the 'senior staff who must maintain the institution's momentum in developing programs and resources' when a president departs (p. 1). How a CDO responds to such a critical career transition is an area that, before this study, had not been researched and called for an in-depth investigation. This research is exploratory in nature as no existing studies formed the basis of this research and no previous studies had been conducted on the topic. Higher education scholars and administrators must contemplate the effect of capital campaigns that are increasing in duration, while presidential tenures are doing just the opposite.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Stress and change are part of typical day for a CDO. How the CDO

chooses to cope and manage those changes is unique to each situation. A change with such enormity, like a presidential transition, demands great time and energy from a CDO. CDOs need to be equipped with the resources to deal with this change, and one way of assessing the situation is with a specific framework designed for transitions.

At various points in life, individuals are confronted with transitions, both positive and negative. Nancy Schlossberg developed an adult transition theory in 1981 with modifications, thereafter, to create, according to Evans *et al* (1998), 'a framework that would facilitate an understanding of adults in transition and lead them to the help they needed to cope' (p. 108). In order to understand the meaning of a transition for a particular person, one needs to examine the type of transition, its context and impact. Schlossberg's theory provides the structure needed to examine a transition from these different angles.

Schlossberg (2004) proposed, 'This transition model can be used as a framework for conducting research on any group or person in transition' (p. 7). Schlossberg's theory was originally created for highly complex working adults (Tover and Simon, 2006). Therefore, it is appropriate for use while studying the CDO at a college or university to better understand how he/she dealt with the presidential transition during a major fundraising effort. Sargent and Schlossberg (1988) suggested that 'people in transition are often preoccupied and a little confused, even if the transition is a desired one' (p. 59). An individual's effectiveness in

coping with transition depends on a series of four S's that Schlossberg introduced in her theory: situation, self, support and strategies. These S's are the potential resources that individuals use in order to effectively navigate a transition.

The CDO's ability to cope with a presidential transition while conducting a capital campaign can be examined through the lens of Schlossberg's transition model. The theoretical framework and Schlossberg's four S's guided this study:

- Research Question 1: *Situation*: What events of the presidential transition impacted the capital campaign?
- Research Question 2: *Self*: How did the CDO react to the presidential transition during the campaign?
- Research Question 3: *Support*: What support helped to ensure continuity during a capital campaign?
- Research Question 4: *Strategies*: What strategies did the CDO employ to navigate the presidential transition during a capital campaign?

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

A qualitative, multiple-site and descriptive case study method was employed for analyzing presidential transitions during capital campaigns. This approach is fitting for this study because the goal was to address the contextual nature of presidential transitions during capital campaigns and the effect of the transition on the CDO. Merriam (1998), Patton (1990) and Yin (2003) regard the case study

approach as particularly useful to understand a complex, social phenomenon, especially one that has not been previously studied. Presidential transitions during fundraising campaigns fit this description. The logic for the multiple-case study strategy, versus a single site, was because of the comparative nature of this research. Each situation was unique, and by providing several descriptive cases, a broad perspective was ascertained. A cross-case analysis was employed to identify best practices and provide a gateway for discussion and future scholarship on the issue.

Ten institutions of higher education, where presidents left office during major fundraising campaigns, are featured in this paper. One institution served as the pilot study, and the remaining nine were analyzed in the next section. Purposive, nonrandom sampling was used to determine a group of CDOs at colleges and universities that met predefined criteria. The criteria were as follows: (1) the CDO worked at an institution of higher education located in the United States; (2) the institution had completed a capital campaign within the past 3 years, 2003–2006, or was planning on completing a campaign by the end of 2007; (3) the institution had a change in executive leadership during any stage of the campaign; and (4) the CDO of the institution had been present during the leadership transition was willing to participate in the study. Based on the above criteria, a maximum variation sample of 27 institutions was identified for potential inclusion in this project. CDO's at all 27 institutions were contacted for participation; 10 completed the study. The final participant list included

Millikin University, Muhlenberg College, University of Redlands, Florida State University (FSU), University of Indianapolis (UIndy), University of North Florida (UNF), University of Wisconsin – Whitewater (UWW), Villanova University and Wake Forest University. The pilot study participant desired anonymity.

Data were collected through document analysis, including newspaper and magazine articles, speeches, press releases and by searching website archives. However, the primary data source for this study was electronic mail (email) interviews. Online asynchronous interviews were employed to conduct the study. In-depth interviews conducted this way were typically semi-structured in nature and were conducted over multiple email messages (Persichitte *et al*, 1997; Meho, 2006). They had the convenience factor of garnering responses at any time of day or night, without any regard to time zones or geography separating the researcher and the participant. Most email interviews occurred over three or four exchanges, some extending more than 2 months in duration. Several opportunities existed to clarify questions and concepts within the email interviews.

The interview questions were originally derived from ‘The Transition Guide,’ a survey instrument developed by Schlossberg, the transition expert whose theory guides the research questions for the study. The instrument was acquired from Schlossberg’s consulting firm, Transition Works (Schlossberg and Kay, 2003). ‘The Transition Guide’ consisted of 56 questions, which embodied the four S’s: situation, support, self and

strategies, as previously mentioned. With input from higher education scholars, 24 questions from the instrument deemed appropriate for this study were rephrased in a structured, open-ended format. Additional probing questions followed the initial interview to clarify or elaborate on issues described in the answers to these questions.

DATA SYNTHESIS

The research questions shaped this next section, which analyzed the results in sync with the four S’s: situation, self, supports and strategies.

Situation

The introduction of this paper suggested that campaigns are becoming lengthy endeavors, and this research supports that proposition. The average campaign studied here was 7 years in duration. FSU had the shortest campaign (2000–2005) and Millikin University’s lasted the longest (1995–2006). Most campaigns held private/quiet phases for more than 2 years before making a public launch. During the quiet phase, as much as 50 per cent of the total dollar goal was raised; never less than 30 per cent was raised or pledged before the campaigns went public.

In a few instances, the presidential transitions impacted the length of the campaigns. Muhlenberg College extended its campaign length and dollar goal under the new president. Muhlenberg’s ‘Pride and Progress’ campaign originally concluded in 2006 having met its \$70 million goal, but under the new president’s leadership, the campaign was extended until 2010 with a new \$105 million goal upon President Helm taking office. The

campaign goal and timeline at UIndy was also extended under new leadership. In another case, UNF delayed its campaign kick-off until a permanent president was named. When the leadership transition occurred toward the end of the campaign, as in the case of UWW, the goal and timeline were not affected by the new president.

In this study, UWW held the smallest fundraising campaign of \$5.7 million with dollars earmarked for a new business building, and Wake Forest and Florida State were the largest ones at \$600 million a piece. There appeared to be no correlation between the length of the campaign and the amount raised. Florida State had the shortest campaign, but raised the most amount of money in this study. At the time of the interviews, *all* the institutions had successfully

reached their dollar goals despite having a change in leadership during the campaign. In fact, most campaigns ended with totals significantly higher than the original goals. UNF, for example, ended its \$65 million 'Access to Excellence' campaign having collected more than \$100 million in cash and pledges.

The presidential transitions occurred at a variety of times during the capital campaigns. See Figure 1 for an illustration of when the transitions occurred. The majority of transitions happened after the university publicly announced the campaign and asked for support under a specific president.

In only three instances the transition occur before the public launch, and two of those cases (UNF's second transition and Muhlenberg's first transition) took place immediately before the public launch. Muhlenberg's

Figure 1: Timeline for presidential transitions during campaigns.

CDO suggested that the timing of this transition right before the campaign went public was the 'worst possible moment.' This negative sentiment of Muhlenberg's CDO was not necessarily due to the result of the campaign about to go public, but the circumstances under which the president was leaving the office. Muhlenberg's former president, Arthur Taylor, was forced out of office because of accusations of misconduct, and this would have been unfavorable for a college at any point in a campaign.

The nature of how the presidents left office varied between institutions. Three campuses cited illness as the cause of the presidential transition and/or causing an impact on the campaign. At FSU, President Wetherell was diagnosed with prostate cancer right after taking the executive post. The cancer diagnosis and treatments forced Wetherell to be out of office for the first 6 months of his term, and he was unable to participate in campaign activities during that time. The presidents at UNF and Wake Forest University were also out of office for several months because of health concerns. UNF's President Hopkins had heart surgery and was unable to devote the requisite time to the campaign during her recovery. She cited health reasons when she resigned from the presidency soon after the surgery. Lastly, during the final 2 years of Dr Hearn's presidency at Wake Forest, he also had limited involvement in the campaign because of poor health. He had a brain tumor that required surgery and an extended leave of absence.

During all of these presidential health problems, the campaigns

continued to function and raise money despite the lack of daily executive leadership. Generally the offices of institutional advancement would cover the executive duties of cultivation and solicitation during the presidents' absences (for example, UNF). At times, the provost and deans were also instrumental in carrying out the executive fundraising responsibilities (for example, Florida State). When the campaigns were successfully able to continue sans presidential leadership, it reiterated the point of UNF's CDO: 'The president is certainly important, but not exclusively' (Allaire, personal communication, 28 December 2006). This study emphasized that how much campaigns are group efforts.

A few of the universities studied had controversial transitions between leaders. At Millikin University, Thomas Flynn served as president from 1998–2002 and resigned under pressure because of financial issues created at the university, during his tenure, as well as a lack of confidence in his leadership ability. Millikin's CDO said that it 'took some extraordinary work on the part of the development staff to overcome' the damaging publicity and negative sentiment (personal communication, 10 January 2007). Millikin's campaign was at the mid-point when Flynn resigned, and the debate over his resignation received front-page headlines in the local newspaper.

National news coverage was the result of Chancellor Miller's decision to bring a controversial speaker to the UWW's campus right before his departure from the top post. Many UWW students, staff and alumni protested the speaker and were relieved

to see Chancellor Miller vacating the office soon thereafter. New leadership helped to mend ties with constituency and eventually end UWW's campaign on a high note.

The contentious departure of Muhlenberg's President Taylor was another situation where most of everyone was eager for change. Owing to confidentiality agreements, the CDO at Muhlenberg was unable to release many details about Taylor's resignation. Constituents were 'suspect' of the institution and its policies and it took a new, confident president and ongoing dialogue with development staff to restore confidence in the college.

Not all presidents left under duress, however. When UIndy's president, Jerry Israel, retired in 2005 because of personal reasons, he was lauded as having had a positive impact on the campus and its capital campaign. Constituents understood his desire for retirement after 7 years in office at the end of a long academic career. UIndy's original campaign goal was met during his tenure, and the new president was able to build upon successes after President Israel retired. The University of Redlands also had a positive transition between presidents. When Dr Appleton retired from Redlands after 18 years in office, he created the new position of 'chancellor' at Redlands specifically to continue his work on the campaign. Chancellor Appleton was a very successful fundraiser, and his ongoing work supported and mentored new President Dorsey in that capacity.

The Villanova President also retired under good circumstances after a lengthy tenure. Father Dobbin stepped down at age 71 after a significant

impact on the campus. His replacement was another Villanova alumna, Father Donohue, who was also well respected. Although these two leaders had very different personalities and objectives for the campaign, the transition was generally seen as a positive one.

All of these presidential transitions impacted their ongoing capital campaigns. Some of the impacts were large, like delaying a kick-off date or stalling mega-gifts until a permanent president was found. Other transitions had smaller impacts on the campaign, like when UWW's Chancellor Saunders took office; she simply worked on wrapping up gifts and helped with stewardship by confidently reassuring donors at the end of the campaign. Mainly the institutions had to deal with the exposure the university received – both positive and negative – because of the change in leadership. Additionally, the development teams were charged with maintaining continuity and stability in light of the transition (how they did this is explained in the Strategy Section). It is important to reiterate at this point that all of the capital campaigns proceeded as planned despite the transitions, and all institutions met and exceeded their campaign goals – most ahead of schedule.

Self

The interviewees constituted an amazing repertoire of advancement officers from institutions of higher education. The nine CDOs that participated in this study¹ had an average of 24 years work in fundraising, and 15 years at their specific institution. Four CDO's were alumni of the institution where they

Table 1: CDO comparison

<i>Institution</i>	<i>CDO at time of transition</i>	<i>Years in development</i>	<i>Years at institution</i>	<i>Led number of capital campaigns at institution</i>	<i>Led number of other capital campaigns</i>
Florida State University	J. Jeffrey Robison	30	11	2	2
Millikin University	Peg Smith Luy	28	26	1	1
Muhlenberg College	Tilghman Moyer	16	14	2	0
University of Indianapolis	Mike Ferin	39	10	1	1
University of North Florida	Pierre Allaire	22	12	1	1
University of Redlands	Neil Macready	22	8	1	0
University of Wisconsin, Whitewater	Jon Enslin	15	11	1	0
Villanova University	Mary McRae	21	21	1	0
Wake Forest University	James Bullock	22	22	1	0

worked. All had a true passion for fundraising and a desire to advance the missions of their colleges.

Table 1 is a comparison of the participants. Indicated in the table are the years they worked in the field of development, the years they worked at the institution and the number of capital campaigns they have led, both at the institution studied and other institutions. The combined experience of these individuals cannot be overestimated.

Mike Ferin from the UIndy had the most experience out of the nine CDOs in the study. He clocked 39 years in development, with all but 1 year in higher education fundraising. He served as vice president at six different colleges, and built UIndy's development program nearly from scratch when he arrived at the college 10 years ago.

Jeff Robison of Florida State (now CDO at University of South Florida – where he is overseeing a campaign) also had more than three decades of experience in institutional advancement. He worked at FSU for 11 years, during that time he oversaw

two capital campaigns and helped increasing the FSU endowment from \$50 million to \$443 million. Robison also oversaw more campaigns than any of the other CDOs in this study – four campaigns during his lengthy career (since this study was completed, that number now equals six!). Two campaigns was the average number that were led by the nine CDOs, although for Macready, Enslin, McRae and Bullock, the campaign mentioned in this research was their first and only (thus far) as a CDO. Enslin and Bullock are in the planning stages of their second campaign as CDO.

Of the nine participants, only two CDO's were women: Peg Smith Luy of Millikin University and Mary McRae of Villanova University (now CDO at Rowan University). Both women had worked in the development arena more than 20 years, and almost their entire careers were spent at one institution. Unlike UIndy's Ferin and FSU's Robison, Luy and McRae climbed the career ladder in institutional advancement without moving cross-country. Luy credited the longevity and

continuity of the development staff at Millikin as one of the main reasons why the four presidential transitions at that school went as smoothly as they did. She mentioned, ‘Donors’ relationships with the University were through that staff ... Their [presidents’] departures didn’t ultimately affect our success because the development staff remained in tact’ (personal communication, 10 January 2007).

Three other CDOs climbed the development career ladder primarily within one institution: Moyer at Muhlenberg (14 out of 16 years at same institution); Enslin at UWW (11 out of 15 years at same institution) and Bullock at Wake Forest (all 22 years in development at one institution). Robison at FSU, Ferin at UIndy, Allaire at UNF and Macready at Redlands all found progressive careers through more mobility. Therefore, prospects for career advancement were available both by moving to new institutions and by seeking out opportunities within one’s own institution.

All the CDOs relied on specific qualities to help them navigate a presidential transition during a capital campaign. Based on the data analysis by mapping and interpreting, the following list represents the nine personality characteristics deemed most important part of the CDOs:

1. Patience (Robison and McRae)
2. Perseverance (Robison)
3. Work drive (Luy, Allaire and Macready)
4. Flexibility (Ferin, Allaire and Macready)
5. Teamwork/Cooperativeness (Robison, Luy, Allaire and Ferin)
6. Confidence (Moyer, Allaire and Enslin)

7. Altruism (Luy and Macready)
8. Resiliency/Hardiness (Bullock)
9. Focus (Moyer, Bullock, McRae and Macready)

Also, while not explicitly cited as important traits, these CDO characteristics were evident in the interviews and bear mentioning here: enthusiasm, optimism, extraversion, passion for work and overall job satisfaction. Having a passion for the work and the institution were especially important to these CDOs. Robison said that he counted on a ‘belief in the importance of what you are doing’ to help him persevere through tough times at FSU. Luy specifically stated, ‘Millikin is one of my passions!’ The participants appeared to truly enjoy their work and be dedicated to advancing the missions of their institutions.

Supports

The CDOs reported that support came from 10 key areas listed here in alphabetical order: the Board of Trustees for the college; the campaign chair(s); the campaign consultant; the campaign steering committee; the development staff; the Foundation board; the incoming president; the interim president; the outgoing president; and senior staff colleagues. Table 2 represents the areas of support and which colleges relied on them. Some institutions are listed more than once because of the CDO relying on a few different individuals or boards.

From that list, four categories were cited as most often providing support during the presidential transition. These areas included the Board of Trustees, the development staff, the incoming president and senior staff

Table 2: Support comparison

<i>Form of support</i>	<i>Institution</i>
Board of trustees	Muhlenberg UIndy UNF Wake forest
Campaign Chair(s) (volunteer)	Millikin Villanova
Campaign consultant	UNF Redlands
Campaign steering committee (volunteers)	Millikin Villanova
Development staff	Florida State Millikin Whitewater Wake Forest
Foundation board	Florida State UNF Whitewater
Incoming president	Millikin Muhlenberg UIndy Whitewater
Interim president	UNF
Outgoing president	Redlands
Senior staff colleagues (Provost, deans and vice presidents)	Florida State Muhlenberg Whitewater Wake Forest

colleagues. The Board of Trustees is the only group comprised of volunteers. Many, if not all, of the board members at institutions of higher education are donors and solicitors for campaigns. Therefore, while trustees are volunteers, they devote a significant amount of time

and resources to a campaign and want to see it succeed.

Vice President Moyer from Muhlenberg indicated that ‘Members of the Board of Trustees provided a great deal of moral and volunteer support to my operation. ... The transition pulled the existing members of the board together. They realized that they would have to increase their own support, which they did, to demonstrate their own belief in the institution’ (personal communication, 1 March 2007). Vice President Allaire at UNF also noted the Board’s involvement in the campaign: ‘The Board of Trustees was indispensable during the second transition’ (personal communication, 28 December 2006). Lastly, Ferin from UIndy said that he ‘sought the advice of trustees I believed could be influential in making sure the campaign plan would be continued’ regardless of who held the top post.

The development staff, the incoming president and senior staff colleagues were also cited as particularly helpful. Bullock from Wake Forest noted that his very experienced staff helped him overcome any difficulties in the campaign because of the presidential transition. Robison from FSU said that his ‘staff never waived’ and that made an impact during the transition. Millikin’s Luy continuously gave credit to her development team and credited the team philosophy for their campaign success in spite of four presidents.

Senior staff colleagues, including other vice presidents, provosts and deans were also supportive and accommodating of campaign demands, especially when the president was out of office, like in Wake Forest’s instance, as well as Florida State’s. While

Florida State's president recovered from prostate cancer surgery, the FSU college deans were helpful in securing gifts and working as the 'faces' of the university. Senior staff colleagues also banded together because of their familiarity with the campus and the demands of the positions and the campaigns.

The new president was cited by several CDOs as a valuable resource during the transition. Because Muhlenberg's new president had more than two decades of experience working in higher education fundraising and college relations, he helped push the campaign in a positive direction after a tumultuous transition. Muhlenberg's new president even increased the timeline and goal of the campaign upon taking office. Other new presidents were seen as effective for the campaign because they were obliging and let the campaign proceed as planned without rocking the boat, like at UIndy, University of Redlands and UWW.

President Zemke from Millikin had years of experience at the institution, both working as the dean of the business school and serving on the board of trustees. He was the fourth president during Millikin's 10-year campaign, and Zemke's intimate knowledge of the university and the campaign – as well as his integrity, work ethic and compassion, as cited by the CDO – made him extremely valuable during the 'home stretch' of the capital campaign.

Interestingly, Muhlenberg's CDO searched for support from colleagues at other institutions who had been in similar situations of a presidential transition during a campaign, but he was unable to find any. Perhaps this research may fill that void. In a couple

of instances, the CDO relied on the experience of the campaign consultant who was hired to assist the campaign. Macready from Redlands said, 'I called on our campaign consultant who previously served as senior vice president at the same R-1 University, both the outgoing president and I had worked for during a major campaign. He provided invaluable advice on maneuvering through the transition period and engaging both the outgoing and incoming presidents' (personal communication, 12 March 2007). All of the institutions represented in this study hired campaign consultants for a part or for all of their campaigns; however, only two CDOs mentioned that the consultants provided significant support during the transition. Luy at Millikin said that the campaign consultant was more important during the planning stages of the campaign: 'A campaign consulting firm conducted a feasibility study for the campaign and was retained to provide counsel for 6 years of the 10-year campaign ... [consultant firm] was an important part of our planning. ...'

Beyond support in the form of people, support also was found by relying on the campaign plan (for example, UNF and Redlands) and the mission of the university (for example, Villanova and Millikin). Allaire at UNF stated, 'I've been through a few presidential changes in my career (three to be exact) and have found that a strong campaign plan, coupled with strong volunteers, will weather most transitions.' McRae at Villanova credited a 'focus on the institutional mission' as getting her through the presidential transition. When the presidential transition caused a change

in priorities for the Villanova campaign, the staff could rely on the overarching mission of the university to carry their campaign message to the constituency. Regardless of the form of support, the CDOs relied on people, groups, messages and meanings to withstand the transition.

Strategies

Although the presidential transitions and capital campaigns profiled in this study were entirely different from one another, the CDOs used surprisingly similar techniques to traverse their situations. The most commonly cited strategies for dealing with a presidential transition during a campaign included (a) providing input in the selection of the new president; (b) communication with constituency; (c) education of the incoming president; (d) involving the new president in the campaign right away – especially through personal meetings and events; and (e) creating new funding priorities. Each one of these areas will be examined.

The first strategy that many CDOs used during a presidential transition was providing input in the selection of the new president. Most of the CDOs in this study sat on selection committees, participated in the interview process and/or provided feedback about the candidates' ability to fundraise during a capital campaign and beyond. On this point, UNF Vice President Allaire said,

My input was sought as to my impressions of whether the president was able to be effective as a fundraiser. Also, I was asked to set up a general interview session with the top alumni and volunteers to see

how the candidates did with public speaking/interaction. Lastly, my role in the process included having dinner with the candidates and our Foundation board members. (Personal communication, 28 December 2006)

Other CDOs reported that they recruited external members for the search committee and assisted in interviews of all candidates (Enslin, UWW and Ferin, and UIndy). They also personally met with the top candidates to discuss the campaign (for example, Moyer at Muhlenberg). Vice President Ferin from UIndy did not serve the selection committee, but he stated, 'I was heavily involved in the interview phase and my counsel was sought by several trustees who served on the selection committee' (personal communication, 25 June 25 2007).

Gaylor (2004), an independent consultant, who has written extensively on the CDO/CEO relationship in non-profit organizations, implied that the hiring process is crucial for both the parties. If the hiring process 'goes awry ... the outcome significantly damaged the organization's ability to raise money' (p. 79). Gaylor outlined 11 action steps that CDOs should take to be involved in the hiring process of the CEO (pp. 80–81). A number of the steps include the ones mentioned above by the CDOs in this study, such as participation in commissioning a search committee and contributing in the interview process. Some of Gaylor's other suggestions included reviewing resumes, solidifying recruitment methods and clarifying the hiring philosophy with the board of directors. The CDOs in this study would probably argue that, while their input

is valuable, they simply cannot devote enormous amounts of time to the presidential selection process, especially during a capital campaign. Regardless, it is recommended that the CDO should be involved at some level to find the best fit for the university and its fundraising goals.

The second strategy – communication with constituents – is another fundamental step in handling a presidential transition during a capital campaign. All of the CDOs interviewed in this study emphasized on the importance of ongoing communication. Even in Muhlenberg's situation, where they were unable to outline the details of the president's termination because of confidentiality agreements, they were 'able to announce an interim president, new board leadership, etc.' (Moyer, personal communication, 1 March 2007).

The common techniques used to communicate the message of a new president were press announcements and interviews, articles in alumni and development publications, email newsletters, website updates, and personal phone calls and letters to top donors. Ferin from UIndy said, 'Our whole arsenal of communication devices was used (press releases, notices in standard publications, press conferences, personal letters and phone calls, etc.). All were orchestrated via a 'Role Out Beverley' plan that was developed immediately after her appointment was determined' (personal communication, 25 June 2007).

Additionally, celebrating the outgoing president's accomplishments (when appropriate) and feting the incoming president through special events was another way to communicate the change in leadership to constituents and involve them in the

process. Villanova's presidential inauguration was a 5-day event that included a faculty and staff reception, a student inaugural ball, a celebratory evening at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, a dinner celebration on their football field and several liturgies. Alumni, staff, students and friends of Villanova were invited to participate in these events that recognized the outgoing president and honored the incoming one. Constituents who were unable to attend could participate via live web-broadcasts or view photos of the events on www.shutterfly.com, a popular Internet photo-sharing site.

The third strategy mentioned in the interviews with CDOs was educating the new president about the campaign. CDOs regularly met with the new president to provide campaign background information, briefings and donor information. In a couple of instances, the meetings even took place before the president's arrival on campus (for example, Muhlenberg and Wake Forest). Bullock from Wake Forest accounted for some success of the campaign for providing the new president – even before he arrived on campus – a 'full advancement office presentation and written plan' to bring Dr Hatch up-to-speed on the capital campaign (personal communication, 28 February 2007).

Allaire from UNE, who dealt with several transitions during his campaign, said, 'I gave the presidents and interims briefing booklets on the campaign plan, introduced them to the top volunteers and donors, and kept them constantly abreast of progress' (personal communication, 28 December 2006). Whitewater's CDO, Enslin, discussed major donors with incoming Chancellor Saunders. They

also deliberated about potential contributors. McRae from Villanova noted the same disclosure of key donors; McRae met with incoming President Donohue to 'review pyramids and rating information on top donors and prospects' (personal communication, 1 February 2007). Educating the president about the institution and the campaign was an important aspect of the president being able to come into the position and 'hit the ground running.'

University of Redlands provided the new president with a 'transition notebook' that was created by the senior staff at the university. CDO Macready said, 'It covered the entire university. There was a section that thoroughly detailed the current status of the campaign, as well as an overview of remaining campaign objectives and the history of development at Redlands' (personal communication, 12 March 2007).

One president who was interviewed in this study, but wished to remain anonymous, stated, 'The president has to get to know the institution, the strategic plan, the mission of the university, the donor base and the history to be successful' (personal communication, 26 February 2007). This president also said, 'The president must be the leader of the capital campaign whether he/she started it or inherited it. Under any circumstances, the capital campaign must be successful or the institution is negatively effected' (personal communication, 26 February 2007).

When a leadership transition takes place during a campaign, it is the CDO's responsibility to provide the incoming president with necessary information about the campaign so

he/she can help in making it a successful effort. Luy from Millikin said, 'We met as often as necessary to help him [President Zemke] feel comfortable and knowledgeable about the campaign. ... It is our job to make him look good. We did and continue to do whatever's necessary to make sure that happens' (personal communication, 30 March 2007).

The fourth strategy piggybacks off the education of the incoming president, and it is involving the new president in the campaign right away. Including the new president could be through face-to-face meetings with donors and prospects, having the president mention the campaign and ask for support in letters and speeches, or engaging the president in campaign events right away. A new president can invigorate a campus and constituency, like in Villanova's case. President Donohue traveled a lot during his first year in office to introduce himself and reach out to a new Villanova prospects. One employee said, 'His presence at these receptions has caused new involvement from our alumni regarding donations to the university' (McGinley, personal communication, 14 June 2007).

A personal visit from the new president also reassured donors of the priorities and mission of the university and built confidence in the new leader (Luy, personal communication, 5 March 2007). Enslin from Whitewater also reiterated this point; the new Chancellor at UWW was cause for a positive outlook on campaign fundraising and the state of the university. Enslin said, 'Her assurance about the campaign's importance and her continuous thanking for their support was reassuring to our donors' (personal communication, 19 January 2007).

Florida State's incoming president, T.K. Wetherell, recognized the ongoing FSU Connect campaign from his very first State of the University address and asked for support: 'I hope you will consider making a gift to the Connect Campaign to help us reach that goal of \$600 million.' Other presidents (for example, pilot study) delivered a public announcement of a large donation soon after taking office, so that the constituency would immediately view the new president as a successful fundraiser (regardless of his/her role in securing the actual gift).

The last strategy deemed important for thriving during a capital campaign when there is a change in leadership was to create a new fund for the outgoing or incoming president. This was really successful at Wake Forest, where the development team created tribute funds in honor of the retiring president. The donations for the tribute funds brought in numerous donations toward the end of the campaign. CDO Bullock said, 'We had a great push leading up to his retirement when many [donors] wanted to help get us over goal by his retirement date. This was really a recognition of his 22 years of leadership' (personal communication, 17 April 2007).

UIndy also developed a tribute for the outgoing president. An annual lecture was created in honor of outgoing president, Jerry Israel, and his wife. CDO Ferin said that both the funds for the lecture, and the lecture itself, were part of their campaign strategy. While future lectures will be open for the public, the first lecture was used as a campaign stewardship tactic, and only major donors were

invited to attend (personal communication, 27 June 2007).

The five strategies – (a) providing input in the selection of the new president; (b) communication with constituency; (c) education of the incoming president; (d) involving the new president in the campaign right away; and (e) creating new funding priorities – helped the CDOs approach the presidential transitions in a positive manner while forging ahead with their capital campaigns.

One strategy that was not mentioned, but could have been an asset, was planning for a change in leadership. In fact, at Millikin, where four transitions took place, Luy indicated, 'None of our planning included what would happen if essential staff left before its conclusion' (personal communication, 10 January 2007). The nine CDOs dealt with the change, even though it was not outlined in their campaign plans. However, any future campaign planning committee should consider the inclusion of a change in leadership and a stratagem for dealing with this situation. Many times, the CDO and the campus are surprised by a change and it can take time to overcome this challenge. Being prepared for this circumstance may prove extremely useful, so the campaign can proceed smoothly. The next section delineates these strategies in detail.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A CDO DEALING WITH A CHANGE IN PRESIDENT DURING A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

1. Communicate with the constituency as soon as possible following the

announcement of a presidential departure. Reassure staff, students, alumni and friends of the university that the campaign will continue as planned. Remain steadfast to the mission of the university and the campaign plan in order to show continuity to constituency during a time of change. The most effective means of communication were found to be face-to-face meeting and interviews, articles in alumni and development publications, email newsletters, website updates, personal phone calls and letters to donors. Sharing the message of the new president and the ongoing campaign at special events, such as inaugural weekends, was also a valuable technique.

2. Provide input in the selection of the new president, and outline the goals for the campaign. Determine what kind of fundraising experience is needed of the incoming president. When possible, sit on the selection committee and participate in the interview process to determine the best fit for the university and the ongoing capital campaign.
3. Educate the new president about the campaign right away, detailing his/her role in it, even before he/she arrives on campus, if possible. Provide campaign background information, briefings and donor information. Keep the new president constantly abreast of progress or setbacks made in the campaign.
4. Involve the new president in the campaign right away. When feasible, have the president announce a big gift soon after taking office to show his/her commitment to the campaign and fundraising. Also encourage the

president to hold face-to-face meetings with donors and prospects, mention the campaign and ask for support in letters and speeches, and participate in campaign events and stewardship right away.

5. Create a new fund for the outgoing or incoming president – or both. Tribute funds established for successful outgoing presidents were profitable for Wake Forest University and UIndy. Wake Forest's new president also created the Presidential Trust for Faculty Excellence to encourage donors to support faculty endowments. New funding priorities can reflect the change in leadership while also moving the campaign in a positive direction.
6. Lastly, it would be beneficial to add to the campaign plan a thoughtful consideration of possible changes in leadership. Rather than improvise if it happens, an addendum to the campaign plan could help those individuals prepare for who will take over the key presidential campaign duties and who will follow up with donors and prospects. A communication strategy following the transition could be outlined. While there are no foolproof answers for handling a presidential transition during a campaign, being prepared for such an occurrence can make things go more smoothly.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to better understand presidential transitions during capital campaigns from the perspective of the CDO. 'We underestimated the impact a

presidential transition would have on a campaign' (McRae, personal communication, 1 February 2007). This statement from the CDO at Villanova University sums up the importance of this study. Before this research being conducted, no formal studies had investigated what occurs when an institution of higher education experienced presidential turnover during a capital campaign. College presidents are rarely staying in office more than 5 years, yet capital campaigns are occurring with greater frequency and greater length.

The four research questions, situation, self, supports and strategies, mimicked Schlossberg's transition theory. The situation was defined differently at each institution, although they did have some similarities, such as lengthy campaigns of 7 years or more, successful goal completions, and transitions that occurred after the campaign went public. Most presidential transitions were negative and restricting to campaign work, even when the transitions went smoothly. None of the transitions were considered an asset to the campaign in progress. FSU's CDO alleged, 'The change distracted the University and thus some momentum was lost' (Robison, personal communication, 19 December 2006).

Overall, this research demonstrated that a successful campaign was possible despite a change in leadership, and that a strong campaign plan, coupled with an experienced CDO, made for an easier transition period. Communication and focus were key management tools for a presidential transition during a capital campaign.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The qualitative, multiple-case study design was appropriate for this exploratory study that conducted empirical research on a real-life experience. Qualitative research, 'most significantly, has a key role to play in providing insights, explanations, and theories of social behavior' (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994, p. 174). The rich, thick description of the presidential transitions, through the voices of the participants, was particularly helpful in determining the context of situation and how and why certain strategies were employed. That being said, a quantitative study of presidential transitions during capital campaigns may garner a larger response rate. This study had a 37 per cent response rate, perhaps because of the lengthy nature of the qualitative interviews. If a modified quantitative survey was used, a larger response rate may result with a broader perspective of CDOs.

Several limitations to the study are based on the qualitative nature of the methodology, which assumes that the results contribute to a general theory of the phenomenon rather making them generalizable to all colleges and universities (Yin, 2003). A diverse group of institutions – public and private, small and large, religious and non-denominational, from various regions of the United States – were included in this study, but each situation of a president leaving during a capital campaign was unique. What occurred at one college may not have transpired at another.

The voluntary nature of the participants limits the study as well. Ten (including the pilot study) out of 27 potential CDOs who were contacted for participation in this project completed

the entire interview process and were included in the analysis. It was assumed that all participants answered the questions explicitly and truthfully, so that the material presented here accurately reflects the circumstances. The data were derived from personal experiences with presidential transitions during capital campaigns and should be noted as such.

Other than quantitative studies, additional studies similar to this one could be conducted using the president as the research subject, rather than the CDO. Having the outgoing and incoming presidents participate may provide a different perspective on leadership transitions during capital campaigns. The presidents may be able to provide additional suggestions of ways to maintain continuity or to keep them abreast of campaign developments.

Another area that warrants further research is the transition of the CDO during a capital campaign. Although CDO turnover does not occur as frequently as turnover in the president's office, it does happen on a regular basis and should be explored in-depth to determine who keeps continuity during a campaign when the CDO leaves. Worth (2002) noted the high turnover of advancement personnel: 'Successful development people are in such demand that the capacity to leapfrog from one job to the next is virtually unlimited' (p. 135). For example, Emory University experienced the departure of its CDO in 2007 during a \$2 billion campaign. In the CDO's absence, University President James Wagner convened meetings with the development staff to continue campaign work. Another interesting study may be examining the departure of both the president and the CDO

during a campaign. Such an occurrence is not very common, but did take place at University of Nevada, Las Vegas during the course of this study.

Finally, the researcher recommends transition studies from a variety of institutions, including community colleges. In recent years, higher education has seen an increase in fundraising campaigns at community colleges, and a study that looks at presidential transitions during capital campaigns at 2-year institutions might provide unique results. Other interesting transition studies during campaigns could come out of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, single-sex institutions and other colleges with specific missions not covered in this research.

Overall, this study provided an empirical view of how CDOs dealt with a change in leadership while conducting a capital campaign. Jon Enslin, the CDO at UWW said, 'The institution is larger than any one person' (personal communication, 19 January 2007). This was certainly true for the nine institutions profiled in this study, as all had successful campaigns despite the changes in leadership. While the president generally serves as the public personification of the college or university, it is possible to maintain continuity during a capital campaign by following the guidelines suggested by the CDOs in this study.

NOTE

- 1 At the time of the study, all participants served as CDOs at institutions of higher education, with the exception of McRae from Villanova University. McRae served as Associate Vice President (Associate CDO) at Villanova during the data collection stage. Following her

participation in the interview, McRae accepted a CDO position at Rowan University in New Jersey and has served as Vice President for University advancement at that institution since July 2007.

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