Original Article

Asian American giving to US higher education

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ABSTRACT Asian Americans have had significant impacts on and within mainstream US society, and their great efforts and gifts in the name of charitable causes are no exception. This study aims to examine perceptions within American university development offices about Asian American giving to US higher education. The article begins with a literature review of previous studies to understand the diversity in fundraising, donor motivations and the characteristics of Asian American giving. Then, the study presents three case studies of Asian American giving to US higher education. The sample universities included in this study showed a high representation of Asian Americans on campus, developed and implemented unique fundraising strategies toward Asian American donors, and recorded significant contributions from Asian Americans. In order to further illustrate the charitable behavior of Asian American donors and also to explore the recent impact of the deteriorating global economic environment to the university fundraising, the author conducted in-depth interviews with development officers. This study not only provides more detailed and significant information on the characteristics of Asian American giving, but also sheds light to the cultural factors and beliefs that motivate Asian Americans' support of higher education in the United States.

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding ethnic diversity in fundraising is a major issue for US universities. Today, an increasing number of minority students provide

opportunities for universities to solicit donation from ethnic minority groups. Consequently, developing understanding and knowledge of cultural traditions behind charitable giving is crucial to success in ethnic philanthropy. As Scanlan and Abrahams (2002) stated, 'Understanding diverse traditions and perceptions of giving will be essential if educational fund raisers are to increase minority people's support of higher education' (p. 203).

The purpose of this study is to examine perceptions within development offices about Asian American giving to US higher education. Asian Americans have had significant impacts on and within mainstream US society, and their great efforts and gifts to the universities in the name of charitable causes are no exception. For instance, Charles B. Wang has donated over US\$50 million dollars to the State University of New York at Stony Brook to establish the Charles B. Wang Center. More recently in 2007, Stanford alumni Yang and Yamazaki pledged \$75 million to enhance environmental and medical studies.

The following study consists of three sections. The first section reviews previous literature regarding diversity agendas in fundraising, donor motivations and characteristics of Asian American giving. Then, the study highlights three case studies of Asian American giving to US higher education. Analyzing campaign literatures and annual reports, the study presents representations of Asian Americans on campus, universities' fundraising efforts in relation to Asian American donors, and documented practices of Asian American giving. Finally, using in-depth interviews with

development officers, the study examines the perceptions of development officers regarding diversity agendas, the characteristics of Asian American giving, and the impacts of the current economic environment on university fundraising.

This research provides information and knowledge to investigate fundraising strategies at major national universities and the role of development officers in soliciting donations from Asian American donors. American higher education institutions can benefit from this study by improving their understanding of Asian American educational giving and better incorporating Asian American prospects in fundraising and in educational endeavors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding diversity in fundraising

While the primary emphasis of this study is on Asian American giving, it is important to understand the role of diversity in fundraising. In the words of Sanford Cloud Jr, the president and CEO of the National Conference for Community and Justice, 'diversification is desirable not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because doing so will increase the effectiveness of fundraising and charitable organizations' (Wagner and Ryan, 2004, p. 66).

Prior research documented the need of diversifying fundraising strategies, particularly given the rapid growth of minority populations. Pettey (2002) stressed the importance of cultivating diversity in fundraising by scrutinizing the histories and successful fundraising practices of and among African

American, Asian American (Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean and South Asian), Hispanic/Latino (Cuban, Dominican, Salvadoran, Mexican and Puerto Rican, and Native American groups. Smith *et al* (1999) further stated that awareness of people's ethnicity helps predict the forms and beneficiaries of giving outside the nuclear family (p. 154).

Research in the field of educational giving has also documented the significance of incorporating cultural traditions and beliefs behind charitable giving into fundraising efforts. Scanlan and Abrahams (2002) presented an overview of giving traditions in minority communities in the United States. This study argued that understanding traditions and perceptions of charitable giving among different minority groups is a vital step for development officers in order to reach out to diverse communities and succeed in future fundraising endeavors (Scanlan and Abrahams, 2002, p. 204).

Other researches further addressed several ways of incorporating cultural traditions into fundraising practices. Newman's (2002) study argued, fundraising strategies of the mainstream organizations need to recognize and serve diverse culture by learning and experiencing the fundraising practices of these local communities. Given an absence of the development officers from ethnic minority backgrounds, Wagner and Ryan (2004) proclaimed the significance of diversifying fundraising professionals.

Prior research documented the importance of diversifying fundraising strategies, particularly by understanding cultural giving behaviors and also

recruiting fundraising professionals from minority groups. Nevertheless, these findings rely heavily on the descriptive data of the minority giving. In addition, these studies overlook the meaning of diversity for development officers or how the universities employ diversity into their fundraising effort. More significantly, these studies failed to present the 'voices' of actors involved in philanthropy and fundraising. This study serves to provide an understanding of diversity agendas by exploring perceived fundraising efforts to cultivate diversity in the university communities.

Understanding donor motivations

Understanding donor motivations helps to build a conceptual framework for exploring Asian American donors' philanthropic behaviors. Previous research has documented the dual-motivations behind charitable giving. Frank (1996) defined donor motivations into two factors: one is a moral sentiment, such as prevailing sympathy and guilt, while the other factor relates more to one's self-interest goals, including a donor's willingness to receive material benefits or gain access to favored networks. Similarly, Kelly (2002) described two levels of donor motivations: (1) raising the amount of a common good (for example, the number of minority students studying computer science, and (2) receiving some private good in return for the gift (p. 46).

Other studies identified specific donors' demographics as strong motivators including: religious affiliations and social commitments, experiences from one's youth, financial resources, and individual beliefs. In Schervish's (2003) study, commitment

to associational communities, one's religious beliefs, political ideology, social concerns or other values, financial resources, and experiences from one's youth significantly impacted an individual's charitable giving behaviors. Hodgkinson *et al* (2002) further noted that solicitation via affiliated organizations most effectively stimulated individual giving, while additional indicators such as religious affiliations, personal experience of volunteering during youth, and other individual compassions or beliefs affects one's willingness to engage in charitable giving.

Previous research demonstrates that the motivation of alumni to give to universities derives from institutional prestige, alumni's college experiences, alumni-institutional relationships and the demographic characteristics of alumni.

Institutional prestige promotes alumni giving (Leslie and Ramey, 1988; Cunningham and Cochi-Ficano, 2002). Leslie and Ramey (1988) found that 'institutional prestige' and 'academic quality' had significant impacts on alumni giving, as reflected in a positive effect of 'Gourman rating' and the 'age of the institution' (p. 125). Later in 2002, Cunningham presented a new theoretical motivation for empirical modeling indicating additional variables that were found to be statically significant. These were 'an institution's academic reputation, the measured scholastic aptitude of its enrolled student population, institution's faculty-student ratio, its function and structure, and the vocational choices of its graduates' (p. 560).

Alumni giving also are influenced by 'alumni's college experience' (Thomas and Smart, 1995; Gallo and

Hubschman, 2003; Monks, 2003; Hoyt, 2004). Thomas and Smart (1995) showed that variables related to donor's status such as 'years since graduation, academic activities, social activities and campus leadership activities' as well as 'spouse alumnus' had a significant impact on alumni giving (pp. 21–24). Moreover, Hoyt (2004) revealed that graduates who were more satisfied with their educational experiences and outcomes, those who had actively participated in student activities, and those who had been involved in university alumni events are more likely to give to their alma-mater (p. 17). Gallo and Hubschman (2003) also determined that such a sense of belongingness and satisfaction with university education was a strong indicator of alumni giving. Notably, recipients of scholarships or financial aids during their schools years were more likely to give back to the university while individuals with student loans will become less engaged in alumni giving (Monks, 2003).

Nevertheless, the impact of the variable 'alumni's college experience' on alumni giving is inconclusive. According to Thomas and Smart (1995), some other studies found alumni's experience in college is not a significant discriminator to predict alumni giving. Also, Leslie and Ramey (1988) stated that the 'feedback link between the educational experience and the long-term financial well being of the institution, "contract failure" problem, may be less severe empirically than had been anticipated theoretically' (p. 560).

Notably, the 'alumni-institutional relationship' is a significant discriminator to predict alumni giving

(Okunade *et al*, 1994; Harrison *et al*, 1995; Taylor and Martin, 1995; Hunter *et al*, 1999). Hunter *et al*'s (1999) study found alumni's motivation derived from emotional attachment to their alma-mater and their desire to give something back. According to Taylor and Martin (1995), the 'perceived need for financial support' remained as the highly discriminating variable to predict both characteristics of donor status and donation level (p. 290). The findings indicated that donor status had significant correlation with independent variables such as 'family income, perceived need for financial support, reading alumni publications, subsequent enrollment for graduate work, special-interest groups, and involvement with university as an alumnus/a' (Taylor and Martin, 1995, p. 299). Also, in the words of Harrison *et al* (1995), 'donors seem to want the psychic satisfaction that accompanies recognition from their former school – from appearing in a list of names in the alumni bulletin, to receiving free football tickets, to having a scholarship or building named after them' (p. 398). Interestingly, proximity – domestic residence – was not a significant predictor of alumni giving (Hoyt, 2004).

Demographic characteristics of donors evidenced a significant impact on alumni's giving behaviors (Okunade *et al*, 1994; Hunter *et al*, 1999; Monks, 2003). Hunter *et al* (1999) revealed several significant demographic characteristics of donors: 'gender, age, family income, years of graduation, degree, degrees from other schools, church affiliation, Greek membership, career preparation, mission, need for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, campus

visits, member of national alumni association, member of local chapter, reunions attended, membership on college boards or committees, and service on community volunteer boards' (p. 535). An interesting perspective of the motivation of alumni giving is demonstrated by Okunade *et al* (1994). This study showed that alumni who graduated from the College of Business, alumni without Greek campus club membership fraternity/sorority, and alumni who graduated with honors and continued their studies at the same university were all highly supportive of their alma-mater (Okunade *et al*, 1994, p. 81). Later research by Monks (2003) supports such findings, indicating graduates with MBA's or degrees from the School of Law tend to engage in alumni giving.

In summary, prior research found individual donors possessed dual-motivations for charitable giving, and their religious affiliation and social commitments, financial resources, youthful experiences, and individual beliefs stimulated their giving behaviors. Moreover, motivations of alumni giving associated with institutional prestige and academic quality, alumni's college experiences, alumni-institutional relationships and background characteristics of the donors to be the significant determinants of alumni giving. This study draws upon these findings to investigate, specifically, the motivations of Asian American giving to US higher education.

Understanding characteristics of Asian American giving and philanthropic motivations

Understanding characteristics of Asian American giving and philanthropic

motivations provides another framework for this study. The following section first summarizes the characteristics of Asian American giving and then describes their giving behaviors.

Among other motivators, the traditional concept of personal connection is all important in Asian American giving. This people-to-people interaction develops the trust and respect between the organization and donors as well as the recipients. Especially for Chinese Americans, personal relationships or connections distinguish Western individual independence from Chinese networking and interdependence (Lee, 1990; Geithner *et al*, 2004; Ho, 2004). In China, the personal relationships and connections tend to carry more weight than formal, institutional, contractual or legal relationships (Geithner *et al*, 2004). This explains why Asian American giving often follows a 'quid pro quo' practice: recipients are expected to reciprocate to donors when asked for charitable donation (Chao, 1999).

Asian American giving tends to be private, personal and small as opposed to Western charitable giving practices, which are often public, professional, large and independent (Deeney, 2002; Ho, 2004; Linebaugh, 2007). This pattern reflects traditional Confucian beliefs that charitable giving should be done quietly so as not to extract personal benefit from altruism (Linebaugh, 2007). Deeney (2002) explained that Chinese American donors prefer to keep their generosity as a private matter, and their patterns of giving usually are transacted in a personalistic or familial manner. Consequently, as Ho (2004) states,

many Asian Americans, especially first-generation immigrants, are least likely to make planned gifts or leave bequests to charities.

Asian American donors dedicate their personal time, most frequently serving as a Board member or volunteering in Asian American organizations. In the words of Deeney (2002), 'Chinese Americans take their philanthropy personally and often are emotionally engaged as well as willing to volunteer their own time for special causes' (p. 167).

In addition, one of the incentives of Asian Americans giving was associated with their gratitude, explained as charitable giving being a natural way to give back and share with the world (Smith *et al*, 1999; Pettey, 2002). Traditionally, Asian Americans possess a strong loyalty towards their hometown and maintain an emotional attachment to their motherland (Chao, 1999; Geithner *et al*, 2004). Research documents that this is particularly true with first-generation Asian Americans; they consider modernizing their motherland as a way of improving their own reputation and social status in mainstream US society. Chao (1999) states:

First-generation donors tend to give more exclusively to ethnic-specific causes both here and 'back home.' By the third generation, however, the largest portion of their contribution tends to support mainstream organizations (p. 217).

The respect for scholarship has long been rooted in Asian American culture (Lee, 1990; Geithner *et al*, 2004). Lee (1990) stated that Chinese Americans'

giving also reflects their strong belief in education. Since most early Chinese immigrants were illiterate and faced many hardships, they believed knowledge and learning would help them to improve their social status. In the words of Lee (1990), 'higher education became an escalator to bourgeoisie status, as parents urged their children to major in the "hard" sciences, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, engineering, business, medicine, dentistry, optometry and veterinary studies' (p. 42).

Another incentive for Asian Americans' educational giving is the Confucian idea of benevolence (*ren*) (Lee, 1990; Shao, 1995; Koehn and Yin, 2002; Pettey, 2002). The traditional Confucian concept of *ren*, translated as benevolence, charity, love and humaneness, continue to influence Chinese American giving (Deeney, 2002). Lee (1990) indicated, 'giving of self exemplifies a certain sense of bonding, which is expressed by loyalty and reciprocity' (p. 31). This Confucius concept is also reinforced by Taoist and Buddhist teachings of giving and reciprocity (Koehn and Yin, 2002). Shao (1995) further noted that 'Asians give because their understanding that benevolence, compassion, interdependence and basic respect for humankind are necessary ingredients to living, first in their families, then in their own ethnic communities, then in the greater society' (p. 56).

Overall, Asian American giving tends to be based on personal connections; both private and personal are accompanied by a strong desire to volunteer their personal time. In addition, desires to reciprocate and share are strong motivators to establish

these connections. Confucian beliefs, in both *ren*/benevolence and the value of education are also significant philanthropic motivators for Asian Americans. These studies above all contribute to a growing body of knowledge and information that help conceptualize and comprehend Asian American giving patterns. Nevertheless, research in this field is incomplete. Primary among these omissions is a need to further investigate the relationships between the destinations of Asian American giving and the specific donor motivations described above.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study presents three case studies of Asian American giving to US higher education. The sample consists of five development officers working at three major US universities: two samples from Stanford University, one sample from Columbia University, and two samples from the University of Maryland (UM). These universities are characterized as having more Asian American students than other ethnic minority student groups, as offering Minor or Major degrees in Asian American studies, and having been established in regions with high Asian American populations. In addition to collecting existing documents such as campaign literatures, annual reports on donations and financial statements, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with development officers.

PROFILES OF UNIVERSITIES FUNDRAISING

The following section serves to provide profiles of each university, particularly focusing on Asian American student populations and on-campus Asian

American entities, university fundraising efforts targeting Asian American prospects and practices of Asian American giving.

Background of Stanford University

Asian Americans at Stanford University

Asian Americans compose the largest minority population group. In the year 2007, a total of 1613 (24 percent) undergraduate and 1029 (13 percent) graduate American or Pacific Islanders students entered Stanford University (Stanford University, 2008a). Formed by the community of Asian Pacific American students, faculty, staff members, and alumni, the Asian American Activities Center houses Asian American resources, organizes numerous events and workshops, and provides space for various events and group meetings (Asian American Activities Center, 2008).

Fundraising at Stanford University

Stanford promotes images of Asian Americans on campus, including the inclusion of Asian Americans in the Stanford University Fund's primary campaign video. The Stanford Challenge launched in 2006 with an initial goal of raising \$4.3 billion, particularly focusing on three multidisciplinary initiatives: the environment, human health, and international peace and security.

Emerging Constituencies under the Office of Development serves to support the Campaign efforts to engage and solicit donations from Alumni of color and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) alums. In 2006, the Office of Development expanded the former

Office of Asian Relations division and launched the Stanford International Division (SID). The SID functions to raise funds from international donors, to develop and strengthen relationships with international prospects, and to empower university entities to engage in international activities (Stanford International Division, 2008).

Notably, the Stanford Asian Pacific American Alumni Club (SAPAAC) engages in an individual fundraising campaign to solicit donations from Asian Americans, encouraging Asian American donors to target their giving directly to SAPAAC (SAPAAC, 2008, p. 4)

Asian American giving to Stanford University

Overall, the Stanford University solicits major gifts from Asian American donors, described in the table below. Key actors are alumni, international business representatives, parents, and faculty, and their gifts support interdisciplinary areas ranging across the humanities and science, medicine, technology and international development (Table 1).

Background of Columbia University

Asian Americans at Columbia University

Cultivating diversity in education is central to Columbia University. In addition to offering extensive financial support for students of color, the university actively supports and promotes opportunities for students to explore and experience diversity. Overall, students from Asian American backgrounds represent the largest population across ethnic minority

Table 1: Asian American giving to Stanford University

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Gift (\$)</i>	<i>Destination</i>
Jerry Yang and Akiko Yamazaki	Alumni	75 million	Jerry Yang and Akiko Yamazaki Environment and Energy Building (Y2E2 Building) & Learning and Knowledge Center for the School of Medicine
Li Ka-Shing	HK businessman	30 million	Li Ka-Shing Center for Learning and Knowledge
Kanwal Rekhi, Kumar Malavalli and Vinod Khosla	Indian businessmen and alumni	3 million	Stanford Center of International Development
Marty and David Hamamoto	Parents	2 million	Professorship in the School of Humanities and Sciences

Source: Johnson (2008); Shwartz (2007); Woods (2008a); Woods (2008b).

groups. Among the most recent incoming class, 50 percent are students of color and Asian American students account for 22 percent (Trustees of Columbia University, 2008). In addition, Columbia has an Asian American Studies Program, part of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, which offers major and concentration degrees.

Fundraising at Columbia University

Meeting global challenges through understanding and action is one of the seven strategic directions of the Columbia Campaign (Columbia University, 2008). This 4-year campaign was launched in 2006, with a total goal of \$4 billion.

Asian Americans serve key roles in the university development. A former graduate of College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia, Dr Clyde Y.C. Wu currently serves on the Trustees of Columbia University. Also, the Columbia Campaign forms two international Host Committees, one in Hong Kong and the other in London. Furthermore, the Campaign Volunteer Leadership

includes several Asian American alumni (Columbia University, 2006). Not only that, the President formed the International Advisory Council; members include distinguished supporters in the United States and around the world, such as alumni and friends from Seoul, Hong Kong, Singapore, mainland China, Thailand and Taiwan (University of Maryland, 2006, pp. 9–10).

Asian American giving to Columbia University

Patterns of Asian American giving at Columbia are diverse, including few major donations, but emphasizing a large number of smaller donations across the institution. Dr Wu pledged the largest gift of \$10 million to establish a research center for molecular cardiology. The current initiatives of the Business School in further strengthening ties with Asian countries has also motivated Asian American donors. Moreover, religious studies solicited endowments for professorships and scholarships from individual and cooperate donors (Table 2).

Table 2: Asian American giving to Columbia University

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Gift (\$)</i>	<i>Destination</i>
Clyde Y. C. Wu, M.D.	Alumni	10 million	Clyde and Helen Wu Center for Molecular Cardiology
Lu Lu C. Wang	Alumni	2 million	Lulu Chow Wang Visiting Scholar Program at the School of Business
Il Hwan and Soon Ja Cho	—	1.5 million	Il Hwan and Soon Ja Cho Professorship of Korean Religion
Gracious Glory Buddhism Foundation	—	500 000 million	Scholarship for Doctoral Students in Chinese Buddhist Studies

Source: Columbia University (2006, 2008); Shaw (2005).

Background of UM

Asian Americans at UM

Asian Americans represent the largest population among other ethnic groups on campus. In 2005, minority students comprised 34 percent of the total undergraduate population and Asian Americans represent the largest of 13.7 percent, a total of 3477 students in number (University of Maryland, 2006/2007, p. iv). At the graduate levels, Asian Americans represent the second largest group after African Americans. The Asian American Studies Program (AAS) offers minor degrees in the area of Asian American studies. In 2007, AAS received a \$2.4 million grant from the US Department of Education, and the University has been designated as an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions.

Fundraising at UM

Maryland recently launched the 'Great Expectations' initiative – a 7-year capital campaign for Maryland to raise \$1 billion in private support. Its mission was to 'transform lives through exceptional educational opportunities and to change the world through knowledge of the highest

order' (University Relations, 2008). Since 2007, the Filipino Cultural Association and AAS have been jointly sponsoring the Annual Filipino American Studies Fundraiser. In 2008, the AAS launched its individual campaign, Building Our Heritage for Tomorrow. With an initial goal of \$5 million, this Campaign is intended to advance teaching, research, scholarship and community engagements related to the field of Asian American studies.

Asian American giving at UM

Asian American alumni served as the primary actors in giving to the UM. Gifts supported building research centers as well as endowment of professorships and research fellowships. Major gifts were pledged to School of Engineering, while other donations targeted computer, math and physical sciences, economics, and interdisciplinary areas (Table 3).

PERSPECTIVES OF DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS TOWARD ASIAN AMERICAN GIVING

The following descriptions and discussion are divided into three

Table 3: Asian American giving to the University of Maryland

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Gift (\$)</i>	<i>Destination</i>
Jeong H. Kim	Alumni	56 million	Jeong H. Kim Engineering Building
T.K. 'Patrick' and Marguerite Sung	Alumni	1.5 million	Professorships in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at the Clark School Graduate Research Fellowship in Mathematics at to the College of Computer, Mathematical and Physical Sciences
Connie Chung	Alumni	50,000	Connie Chung scholarship
Nai-Chi Wang	Alumni	50,000	Dudley and Louisa Dillard Fund in the Department of Economics

Source: Caramello *et al* (2007); University of Maryland (2006; 2008); University Relations (2008).

sections. The first section explores the meaning of diversity as it relates to the works of development officers. This attempt is to answer the questions of whether diversity is a necessary component of university development work, and how universities are encouraging diversity in their fundraising efforts. The subsequent section highlights perceived characteristics of Asian American giving to US higher education. In particular, the second section examines alternative fundraising strategies for soliciting Asian American giving, major challenges of incorporating Asian Americans donors, and perceived motivations of Asian Americans to support the university. The last section discusses the impact of the deteriorating global economic environment to the university fundraising. Within these three sections, the questions to be answered include: how did the university fundraising strategies change over the past 5 years and what are some of the most recent trends in the ways Asian Americans contribute to the university.

Diversity agenda in University fundraising

Overall, development officers acknowledged the role of diversity, but they held multiple perceptions regarding the meaning of diversity. Similarly, previous research has stated the significance of cultivating diversity in university fundraising (Smith *et al*, 1999; Pettey, 2002), but there has been little agreement regarding a conclusive definition for diversity as it is utilized in practice. Responses from interviewees ranged from a definition of diversity as 'Asian American, Hispanic, African American, and American Indian, and LGBT' (personal communication, 23 February 2009) to another development officer's explanation that diversity is 'respecting where they are coming from, that may means in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, immigrants, and their own economic backgrounds' (personal communication, 5 March 2009). Another interviewee defined diversity in terms beyond ethnic backgrounds, stating that diversity means 'people are judged by their merits not by color of their

skin' (personal communication, 26 March 2009).

Nevertheless, all interviewees expressed that respecting diversity has become imperative for today's university development work. One interviewee recalled that historically philanthropists were predominantly white males, and it was not until the late 1990s that people started paying attentions to women in philanthropy. Until then, she explained, development officers did not know women philanthropists had different areas of interests than traditional donors; they were much more concerned about making impacts, observing the impact of their gift, and supporting social justice issues. In the twenty-first century, she continued, unlike prior generations, where the majority of philanthropists were white and older, 'this generation of philanthropists is also going to include African Americans, Asian Americans. They are going to be men and women, and they are going to be younger' (personal communication, 5 March 2009).

Accordingly, while not defining diversity, universities are pursuing and employing policies to embrace diversity agendas in development offices. As one interviewee mentioned, universities have launched campaign efforts that have a specific focus on diversity agendas. Similarly, universities employ initiatives to promote minority giving. One development officer asserted, 'They [the university] have me in this position', a role specifically assigned to engage and solicit gifts from alumni of color (personal communication, 23 February 2009). Furthermore, this university offers workshops on diversity or educational giving among specific ethnic groups.

In some cases, diversity agendas have been effectively integrated into the universities' networking efforts. For instance, International Alumni clubs organize domestic alumni events and activities in order to connect remotely distanced alumni into the university community. Previous findings support this conclusion that proximity is not a strong predictor of alumni giving, but rather, those who engage in alumni activities are more likely to give back to their alma-mater (Hoyt, 2004).

In reference to Wagner's and Ryan's (2004) study highlighting the diversity of development officers, one development officer mentioned, one development officer mentioned, 'at [name of the institute] there is a really diverse staff. Many more African Americans than any other Advancement Office I know of, but still not a lot of Asian Americans... I think we are going to have to have Asian Americans' (personal communication, 5 March 2009).

Characteristics of Asian American giving to US higher education

Fundraising strategies targeting Asian American donors

Notably, all universities investigated did not track donations by ethnicity. In fact, many development officers employed traditional solicitation strategies for Asian American donors. When asked about the rationale behind utilizing generic strategies, one development officer replied, 'I don't approach Asian Americans any different than I approach any other alumni, parents, and friends. Every approach is different because you are speaking to an individual'

(personal communication, 5 March 2009). The other development officer also mentioned, 'I wouldn't necessarily say that the strategies are different. I would say that highlighting what the university is doing that speaks to the Asian American community is really the focus of how we would seek to engage Asian American alumni ... fundraising is fundraising ... who you are talking to, simply what you are offering them makes it more engaging to them, but how you fundraise is the same for anybody' (personal communication, 23 February 2009).

Yet, understanding cultural sensitiveness and awareness is a central competency for development officers working with Asian American donors. Previous findings do support this assertion that incorporating cultural traditions and beliefs into fundraising attempts is critical to fundraising success (Newman, 2002). Another development officer emphasized the importance of cultural sensitivity and communication styles; 'you have to be sensitive to your communication style ... you cannot be too confrontational, you have to always respect them' (personal communication, 26 March 2009). The central idea is keeping a central measurement of 'fair balance' between the Asian American donors. This interviewee continued, 'You always have to maintain a respectful, friendly distance in some ways. You have to provide a great level of professionalism, and maybe over time you become friends, but still you are not a friend, you are a professional in the field' (personal communication, 26 March 2009).

Development officers employed multiple strategies to identify the specific interests of Asian American

donors. One way is working with key Asian American figures, including the faculty, staff, Asian American alumni and other representatives of the community. One fundraiser elaborated:

I would work with the staff at the [on-campus Asian American-related organization], talk to them about the things they are doing that may be interested. I would talk with Asian American alumni about what their interests are at the [university], I would talk to other development staff, I would also talk to the staff or programs that would have some impact on the Asian American community. (Personal communication, 23 February 2009)

For all development officers interviewed, solicitation strategies develop through personal relationships. When asked about ways of identifying potential Asian American donors, one interviewee mentioned approaching friends of the current supporters of higher education. In his/her words, those friends are 'probably like-minded people' (personal communication, 26 March 2009). Another development officer mentioned, 'When I want to reach out to a prospective donor, my first inclination is to pick up the phone and call them. ... if I can't get them, then I would ask either a faculty or maybe key volunteers (i.e. Board of Visitors) to make an introduction' (personal communication, 5 March 2009). Notably, these person-to-person interactions reflect an emphasis of personal connections in Asian American giving as well as the private, personal and smaller-scale practices of Asian American

giving (Koehn and Yin, 2002; Geithner *et al.*, 2004).

Building trustful relationships with Asian American donors requires time and multiple contacts. One development officer mentioned, 'I don't usually ask for gifts during the first meeting. I want to get to know them first, so that process is in a part of what we do even during this economic downturn or even outside this economic downturn' (personal communication, 26 March 2009).

In sum, the primary role of development officers is 'listening', primarily as a way to identify the match between a donor's areas of interests and the mission of the university. One interviewee said, 'you want to listen ... really finding out what motivates this person to give to any charity, what kind of emotional connections they have to the institutions that you represent, or the causes that you represent' (personal communication, 26 March 2009). Interestingly, some universities offer workshops for development officers on related topics, such as 'how to be an effective listener' and 'how to be a trustful advisor'.

Challenges for incorporating Asian American donors

Engaging Asian American alumni as part of university communities is a major challenge for development officers. Several interviews revealed Asian Americans' disconnections with their university. In the words of one development officer:

Alumni of color generally tended not to be as engaged and connected to the university. I think there tends to be a little

more skepticism about the university's commitment to issues of diversity ... so I think there are some hurdles that you have to get over with regard to trust and making sure that they understand the importance of being involved. (Personal communication, 23 February 2009)

In fact, many Asian American alumni form reunions solely within their own ethnic communities. Revisiting a previous conversation with Asian American donors, one development officer said, 'a prospective Asian American donor, who is also an alumnus and his family have never attended [university's reunion] ... it's not that they weren't invited – they get mailings just like everyone else – but they didn't think the annual event contained anything meaningful for them'. However, a number of this alum's Asian American colleagues, who graduated with him – whether they came from Mainland, or Taiwan, continue to get together and have their own annual celebration; they have no negative feelings about the university; but, their attachment is to each other and not to the university as an institution' (personal communication, 3 March 2009).

Another challenge is soliciting monetary support from Asian American donors. This is in addition to traditional donations of time and personal efforts to support voluntary causes. As documented in previous research, Asian American donors possessed a strong desire to dedicate their personal time, volunteering for the Asian American organizations or serving as the Board members (Deeney, 2002). In contrast,

financial supports have primarily benefited their family and ethnic groups (Ho, 2004). One respondent explained:

Asian Americans are accustomed to giving in terms of their time – they are very involved in the community and/or serve on various committees, etc; but, they feel that that should be the limit of their giving. They don't see giving in terms of dollars. It just isn't part of their tradition. Giving money has always been about giving to a family and giving to a mainstream university is a relatively a new concept ... it is not a practice in which they've been involved throughout the generations. It's not that they are withholding, or that they are parsimonious, it's just that financial contributions to an organization are not part of their psyche. (Personal communication, 3 March 2009)

Working with donors in international settings, unavoidable obstacles are distance and communication. One development officer mentioned, 'You [development officer] are not in front of them on a regular basis, and you might lose the momentum' (personal communication, 26 March 2009). In order to overcome these difficulties, development officers employ meaningful e-mail and telephone communications, and frequently travel to Asian countries to meet with the prospective donors.

Motivation of Asian American donors

For Asian American alumni, dissatisfaction with their university

experiences stimulated their charitable behaviors. This further elaborates the previous findings regarding the relationships between alumni's college experiences and their subsequent involvements with alumni giving (Thomas and Smart, 1995; Gallo and Hubschman, 2003; Monks, 2003). One development office mentioned, 'one Asian American donor never felt that the university was all that welcoming ... he didn't feel as if he ever fit in ... it's not that anyone was hostile to him ... it's just that he never felt embraced. Nevertheless, as an Asian American alumnus, he wants a very full experience for his children, one which he himself did not have' (personal communication, 3 March 2009).

Scholarship support is certainly a motivator of Asian American donors to give to higher education. Previous research has also documented this traditional belief in education (Lee, 1990; Geithner *et al*, 2004). In the words of one development officer, Asian Americans view 'education as a ticket way out poverty and it's a way to upper mobility of the students' (personal communication, 26 March 2009). Therefore, as another development officer explained, 'there's a lot of parents whom I met who are alums or who are not alums, but their children are alums, and they want their children to have a really rich experience' (personal communication, 3 March 2009).

A Western concept of philanthropy encourages second generation Asian American donors to support the university. Previous research has revealed that first generation Asian Americans are more likely to give back to their home countries or give

specifically to Asian American-related causes, while giving by second and beyond generations tend to be directed more toward mainstream organizations (Chao, 1999; Ho, 2004). One development officer responded, younger Asian American alum tend to 'give more closely to their non-alumni of color counterparts, so they tend to give more generally to the university because they feel more connected to the class than the past generations have' (personal communication, 23 February 2009). Another interviewee noted,

In speaking about giving to the university, another interviewee remarked:

we may not always succeed with the first Asian American generation, but, if we do it right, and we build relationships, committing ourselves and our time to it, I think we will ultimately succeed with the second generation; or, the first generation, as it gets older, and sees what the value has been for their children with this university ... with the second generation, many of them were born in America, so the culture of philanthropy is something that they became more aware of; and, they are more Americanized, too. It's not that they are turning their backs on their heritage, but they are picking up an additional identity; they've got some of the old pathways, but also a lot of the new. (Personal communication, 3 March 2009)

Interviewees concurred that the increased influence of Western values of philanthropy inclines second

generation donors to support higher education in the United States.

Asian Americans, especially those who have adopted one's sub-ethnic and Asian American identities, tend to support Asian American causes. One development officer mentioned:

You first have to believe there is such a thing as Asian Americans ... People who donate to Asian American causes believe there is a connection between your own struggle as a Chinese American and Filipino American, Korean American, and Japanese Americans ... there's a commonality in terms of what you are facing as an Asian American group. (Personal communication, 26 March 2009)

This interviewee continued,

they [Asian American donors] are aware of the challenges that they face as Asians or Asian American in this country, and they want to make the future better for other Asian Americans ... they also want to help Asian Americans like themselves; that's why you see a lot of Asian Americans wanting to give to Asian American causes or students on campuses and elsewhere. (Personal communication, 26 March 2009)

Impact of economic environment to the university fundraising

Recent disruptions of the global economy have had considerable impacts on university development offices. Development officers mentioned, 'It's impacting their [donors'] country, it's devaluing

the currency, it's hurting their business, and it's hurting their families, it's slowing down the economy' (personal communication, 26 March 2009). In fact, several development officers invited to complete the survey and interview for this research project abstained, citing an immediate need to focus on their own professional activities because of the current economic environment.

Those development officers interviewed expressed a similar expectation, that to succeed, their offices must persevere with current fundraising strategies. One development officer noted:

What we do has to stay the same ... we have to be continuing to cement our relationships, build new relationships. At the same time we are not going to get the money that we have been getting ... I think that people, whether suffering or not, whether they are investments are down or not, psychologically, they are not ready to make gifts. (Personal communication, 5 March 2009)

Another interviewee emphasized the importance of strengthening current personal connections. He explained, 'If you are not asking for funds right away, you want to make sure you are at least anomaly and continuously thanking people for gifts that they made' (personal communication, 26 March 2009).

Under these economic environments, development officers perceive increasing practices of diaspora philanthropy between the US and Asian counties. One interviewee said:

I think increasingly people are seeing the interconnectedness of one's

experiences here in the US and in Asian countries. You'll start seeing Asians who are more globalized; who lived in many different parts of the world ... their philanthropy here may be promoting that kind of interaction (personal communication, 26 March 2009).

Another observation is in terms of broader scopes of Asian American giving to US higher education. One interview explained:

Specific ethnic groups that celebrate their identity in perpetuity; regularly gather around a meaningful hero or individual that they want to honor ... With African Americans, certainly, there have been ongoing celebrations around Martin Luther King, Jr or Rosa Parks, among others. What Asian Americans can and should do, is focus more extensively on key individuals who exemplify the very best of their heritage; in recognizing accomplishments of these leaders, more named scholarships and programs might be established: students enrolled in Asian American Studies, for example, who similarly exhibit the qualities of such outstanding Asian American leaders, could then be awarded financial support for demonstrating extraordinary scholarship and potential. The overall process would help to promote a more expansive culture of philanthropy within the Asian American community. (Personal communication, 3 March 2009)

Considering today's economic environments, universities' efforts for encouraging diaspora philanthropy

between the United States and Asia, providing opportunities for prospects to unite under specific cultural causes, will further stimulate Asian American giving to US higher education.

CONCLUSION

By exploring the actual 'voice' of development officers who are working closely with Asia American donors, this study revealed undocumented perspectives of Asian American giving to US higher education.

As mentioned earlier, several development officers abstained from participating in interviews citing urgent needs to focus on their own professional activities because of the current economic downturn. As a result, the sample size is relatively small with the study drawing from three universities based on the availability of the development officers. While such sample selection limits applicability to the overall Asian American practices of giving in higher education, the in-depth interviews with development officers provided higher quality of information, including working definitions of diversity in development offices and the cultural values and beliefs behind Asian American giving. Regarding university selection, while universities differed in terms of the types of institutions, state allocations, history, and overall school size, all three universities were 4-year research institutions with high Asian American representations. Even though the institutional differences of Asian American giving are not the central focus of this study, findings from this study indicate that context matters when examining solicitation strategies. That is, universities with higher

Asian American representations were more likely to have diversified fundraising agendas and initiatives, specifically by soliciting gifts from Asian American donors. Furthermore, the level of development officers' commitments to Asian American communities and their experiences working with Asian American donors varied across the informants. This suggests a lack of evident credentials for development officers serving for Asian American donors. More significantly, the study explores Asian Americans as a singular group and fails to investigate immigrant histories and cultural backgrounds of specific, individual ethnic groups. While exploring the different patterns of giving and donor motivations across the sub-ethnic groups is certainly significant, the study indicated that educational giving by Asian American as a large group has not yet received scholarly attention, much less that of individual groups. Fundamental studies on Asian American giving in higher education will provide a platform for future researches on educational giving by specific ethnic groups.

Overall, this study revealed that neither the development officers nor the universities had specific strategies or policies to solicit gifts from Asian American donors. As discussed above, all informants did emphasize the need to incorporate diversity into university fundraising, and significant numbers of previous studies supported these statements. Some universities provided workshops related to the issues of diversity and similarly assigned positions in development offices specifically to serve diverse donor groups. All of these activities

simultaneously occurred within larger university campaign efforts that expressly embraced a particular diversity agenda. Nevertheless, one cannot overlook the necessity and meanings of alternative solicitation strategies for reaching out Asian American donors. This study showed that Asian American alumni felt emotionally disconnected to the university, and they rather preferred to form reunions within their own community. This suggests traditional alumni activities or events might not be effective, but rather, alternative strategies featuring their ethnicity might more effectively incorporate larger Asian American alumni. Also, traditional patterns of Asian American giving celebrate personal and private giving, and hence, development officers typically perceived Asian American donors as introverted. In addition, Asian values of philanthropy emphasize time commitments while financial support traditionally benefited members of the family or relatives exclusively. For a vast majority of Asian American prospects, therefore, giving monetary support to universities is a practice in contradiction with numerous cultural preferences. In addition to realigning fundraising strategies, further efforts must be made to integrate cultural sensitivity into planning processes to establish and improve relationships Asian American prospects unfamiliar with Western philanthropic conventions. Especially in difficult economic environments, incorporating non-traditional donors into university fundraising requires considerate care and attention.

This study also indicated that development offices have not effectively employed previous research

findings into actual fundraising activities. This is understandable given that hardly any study has synthesized the field of Asian American giving from the more commonly studied fields of diversity in university fundraising and donor motivation. As mentioned earlier, significant numbers of research has highlighted current trends of diversity agendas in fundraising. Similarly, many studies, particularly ones around the issues of alumni giving, have focused on donor motivations. This research has tangentially approached aspects of Asian American giving as they have pertained to studies of fundraising and philanthropy, but until now, no research has focused specifically on Asian American giving to US higher education. Because there is a lack of consolidated information available and accessible to development officers, there is an understandable gap in research knowledge and fundraising practice. Compiling aspects of relevant research from multiple disciplines requires tremendous investments of time and effort, discouraging or preventing development officers' work to assemble this body of work independently. This also brings up a critical gap between practitioners and researchers. If the research findings are not effectively applied into actual development activities, what is the significance of conducting research in fundraising and philanthropy?

All in all, synthesizing the components of research findings and utilizing them to construct specific practices to solicit Asian American giving to higher education is crucial for the development of this type of philanthropy. This requires not only independent efforts by higher

education research and personnel, but also collaborative efforts between practitioners and academic researchers. Development offices must strive to improve their own work developing unique, Asian American giving strategies. For example, more comprehensive methods for tracking donor ethnicity would help development officers build quantitative data sets to aid results based analysis. Quantitative data would expand the interpersonal understanding of Asian American giving to provide broader understandings of current trends and patterns of philanthropic giving by different ethnic groups. From this dataset, development officers would be able to identify the overall characteristics of giving destinations and areas of interests among Asian American donors.

Moreover, development offices need to encourage development officers to, instead of working with populations generally, specialize in Asian American philanthropy in higher education. Specialization of staff could be further supported by recruiting more Asian American development officers and development offices offering workshops or training regarding cultural sensitivity and donor behaviors that are particularly unique to Asian American donors.

Furthermore, development offices maybe able to utilize institutional support to employ graduate assistants who could help collect and further knowledge of Asian American giving to higher education. This is one way of building a bridge between practitioners and researchers; by supporting the academic activities and research of graduate students within the practice-base contexts of

development offices, both research and fundraising would benefit, exchanging knowledge of fundraising research while gaining valuable data from professional experiences.

In closing, though, further research must put together the pieces of previous studies into coherent impression of Asian American giving to US higher education, for the benefit of researchers, fundraising professionals, Asian American populations and American higher education in general. One way is conducting larger-scale interviews with development officers from different types of institutions. As mentioned above, the study limited samples to major universities. However, if the major universities have not yet consolidated specific strategies or policies to raise funds from Asian American donors, what sort of patterns characterize those universities and colleges with less of a rapport with Asian American populations? Understanding the multiple dynamics of giving practices will broaden the scope of Asian American fundraising strategies. Also, learning from the perspectives of Asian American donors will further enrich the practices of Asian American giving to US higher education. Ultimately, the only way to gather conclusive knowledge and information about the Asian American philanthropy in higher education, is engaging two major players on the same table; that is development officers and Asian American donors.

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