Original Article

The relationship between fundraising practice and job satisfaction at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Received (in revised form): 29th August 2010

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ABSTRACT Fundraising, as studied from a communications/public relations perspective, is an understudied function. This research examines fundraising at public and private historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), specifically exploring how these fundraisers incorporate various fundraising strategies into their communication outreach programs with donors and how the utilization of various fundraising communication styles influence how fundraisers view their jobs and the relationship with their employers. Through a survey of 87 HBCU fundraisers, the researchers found that fundraisers largely use one-way fundraising strategies rather than using interactive relationship-building ones. In addition, the location of the institution's fundraising office played a statistically significant role in what models an organization used. Finally, job satisfaction was correlated with the type of fundraising communication HBCU fundraisers engaged in. *International Journal of Educational Advancement* (2010) 10, 198–215. doi:10.1057/ijea.2010.17

Keywords: public relations; situational theory; communication

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INTRODUCTION

According to Betsey (2008), 'HBCUs are a diverse group, including public and private, four-year and two-year

institutions, co-educational and single-sex institutions, research universities and professional schools, and vary in size from several hundred students to over 10,000' (p. 1). The 105 colleges designated as historically Black institutions only account for 3 percent of the United States' educational institutions, yet these schools enroll 14 percent of all African-American undergraduate students and graduate approximately one-quarter of African Americans who receive college degrees (Betsey, 2008; Gasman and Tudico, 2008; Ricard and Brown, 2008). Although these schools continue to be starting points for many African-American professionals, their relevance to American higher education is constantly questioned. As Willie *et al* (2006) stated, 'Black colleges are a classic illustration of being damned if you do and damned if you don't. For Black colleges and universities, antinomies appear to be eternal' (p. 23).

The development of historically Black institutions of higher education has been an uneven and uneasy course of events and actions. Since the founding of the first Black college in 1837, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have suffered from a supreme shortage of financial support (Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins, 2003). This points to the importance of the advancement function at these educational institutions. As Waters (2009) wrote, 'Fundraisers play a critical role in ensuring that charitable nonprofits receive their share of these contributions from major gift donors, who are capable of giving multi-million dollar gifts, to annual giving donors, who give donations that range

from \$5 to several thousands of dollars' (p. 113). The advancement function at historically Black colleges is a relatively new function, but higher education development has been in existence since the founding of Harvard University (Kelly, 1998). The experiences of fundraisers have been documented, but most of the literature grounds fundraising in case studies of single institutions rather than using theory to provide a more holistic examination of fundraising (Kelly, 2002). The purpose of this study is to provide some benchmark numbers for understanding the fundraisers' career experiences at HBCUs using public relations theory.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

In the area of development, the assumption has been that fundraising is comparable to marketing (Kelly, 1998). Believing that the effective management of relationships between charitable organizations and their donor publics contributes to organizational success, Kelly contended that, historically, marketing has been the adopted approach to fundraising. Indeed, many of the contemporary scholars use theories derived from direct marketing as a basis for their work (for example, Sargeant *et al*, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Sargeant and Jay, 2007). However, most of these studies are based on general surveys of the public or surveys of nonprofit organizations' donor databases. These donors largely represent annual giving donors, who contribute only a small portion of the dollars contributed to nonprofit organizations (Weir and Hibbert, 2000). Waters (2010) found that major gift donors to nonprofit

hospitals evaluated their relationship significantly stronger than their annual giving counterparts. He argued that the movement away from the marketing principles used in annual giving campaigns to the personalization that public relations offer for major gift efforts significantly enhances a donor's feelings toward their relationship with the charitable nonprofit.

Kelly (1991) suggested fundraisers would benefit from moving away from marketing principles because treating donors as consumers was a misuse of the nonprofit organization–donor relationship, as the contribution of charitable gifts did not involve a *quid pro quo* exchange. In addition, the role of marketing in an organization is to generate sales through the change of product and services, whereas the role of the fundraising is to support a charitable organization's programs and offerings by generating gifts and building donor relationships.

Because of the discipline's focus on mutually beneficial relationships, Kelly argued that fundraising's practical and theoretical home was in the discipline of public relations. Marketing scholars' resistance to embrace public relations as a home for fundraising often rests in the field's pigeon-holed placement of primarily serving as a source of promotion and publicity through media relations efforts (for example, Kotler and Mindak, 1978; Kitchen, 1996; Ivy, 2008; Kotabe and Helsen, 2009). However, when public relations practitioners are allowed to break free of the media relations stereotype in non-integrated marketing environments, their involvement with a variety of organizational stakeholders, such as investors,

government regulators, communities, creates fertile ground for organizational relationships to grow. This parallels the involvement fundraisers have with donors.

Given these similarities, it is valuable insights into the fundraising process can be gleaned by using public relations theory. This is particularly true given repeated practitioner handbooks and scholarly research that suggests that Pareto's principle is applicable to fundraising as well; that is, 80 percent of donations will come from only 20 percent of donors (Burnett, 2002; Bac and Bag, 2003). Given the economic value of these major gift donors, fundraisers often steer clear of mass targeted marketing strategies and incorporate public relations strategies into these relationships. These interpersonal strategies are present throughout Kelly's (2001) explication of stewardship.

Stewardship in fundraising

Kelly (2001) and other scholars (Waters, 2009a; Worley and Little, 2002) argue that stewardship is a function that is embedded in the processes of both fundraising and public relations and is 'the second most important step in the public relations process' (Waters, 2009a, p. 114). For example, Hon and Grunig (1999) linked together the four stewardship strategies – reciprocity, responsibility, relationship nurturing and reporting – as symmetrical strategies that help organizations create, maintain and strengthen relationships with their publics. Ledingham (2003) claimed that stewardship is a necessary component in the relationship management approach to public relations.

Kelly (1998) first explicated stewardship in the context of fundraising beyond merely managing donations responsibly, when she wrote that 'stewardship must be managed by those fundraisers who were responsible for each step in the ... raising of gifts' (p. 433). The stewardship process in the two-way symmetrical model of fundraising and public relations includes reciprocity, responsibility, reporting and relationship nurturing (Kelly, 2001).

The obligation of the organization is to ensure that donors are thanked for their contributions to the organization. Also, the organization's responsibility is to preserve the linkages with donors and to supplement the relationship with communication and information that will continue the donor's interest and focus the donor's attention on that institution. Reciprocity, the first concept of stewardship, maintains a balance between the organization and the donor. Gratitude, appreciation and recognition must be extended on behalf of the institution. The responsibility component of stewardship requires organizations to use gifts properly and to be accountable: 'Responsibility requires organizations to keep their word. Promises made when seeking support must be kept' (Kelly, 2001, p. 285). The reporting mechanism demands that donors not only be informed of their gift's use, but also be told about the impact of that gift on the institution. This requires the publishing of annual reports, 'complete with financial data and evidence of how gifts helped the organization meet its goals' (Kelly, 1998, p. 440). The final process of stewardship is relationship nurturing. The relationship between the donor and the organization is

important, and, through the other components of stewardship, that bond must be maintained beyond the solicitation period. However, as public relations theory explains, there are multiple models of communication that can be used in demonstrating stewardship.

Four models of fundraising

Approaching fundraising from a public relations perspective, Kelly (1995) identified four historical models of fundraising. The following paragraphs will examine the characteristics and origins of each model from public relations and fundraising perspectives.

In the fundraising context, the press agency model is one that relies on emotion to motivate donors. 'Use of the emotional rather than the educational approach to getting money for popular philanthropy continues, though perhaps not the same extent as was practiced in the early 1920s' (Kelly, 1998, p. 175). University development offices, unlike most nonprofit organizations, do not adopt this approach toward fundraising (Kelly, 1991). Used to create propaganda for a cause, this model has the intention to change the message receiver's behavior, and truth is not an essential factor.

Communication from the organization to the public is a one-way avenue: information spews forth from the organization yet few comments, responses or concerns are returned to the organization. Manipulation, emotions and control are the foundation of this model, thus making it the oldest, most unethical and most irresponsible of the four models.

Corporations and government agencies that were thrashed in the

muckraking press of the 1920s developed the public information model. Recruiting reporters to serve as ‘in-house journalists’, corporations then depended on the positive stories created. Truth and accuracy are important in this communication model, but persuasion – stemming from one-way information flow from the organization to public only – is still a key element in its practice.

In terms of fundraising, the interests of the donor are outstripped by the interests of the organization. Targeting the ‘enlightened donor’ is the goal of the public information model. While disseminating needs information, the fundraising based in this model is truthful and depends on the rational interpretations of intelligent donors (Kelly, 1991).

The two-way asymmetrical model introduced scientific research to public relations, enabling practitioners to seek information from and disseminate information to publics. Introduced by Edward Bernays, persuasion, propaganda and manipulation could be used in the two-way asymmetrical model to engineer the public’s consent toward organizational objectives and goals. Bernays (1955) wrote that persuasion is fundamental to the practice of public relations: ‘On the whole, persuasion fills a great social need. It would be ideal if all of us could make up our minds independently by evaluating all pertinent facts objectively. This, however, is not possible. None of us have access to all facts about everything’ (p. 10). The reliance and propensity to push publics into compliance creates an alignment between this model and the first two models. Grunig and Hunt (1994)

called this model selfish ‘because the organization that uses it believes it is right (and the public is wrong) and that any change needed to resolve a conflict must come from the public and not from the organization’ (p. 8).

The purpose of this fundraising model is to scientifically persuade donor giving. It is dependent on accessibility to donor publics, and results are evaluated by dollar totals. Fundraising practitioners at universities conduct research to identify and predict donor patterns of donors. Understanding the behavioral motivations of donors – alumni, friends, corporations and foundations – help practitioners craft messages and needs to match those of donors. In certain instances, universities willing to raise funds will change programs or services to attract gifts.

Similar to the two-way asymmetrical model, the two-way symmetrical model uses research to understand motivations and attitudes. Research is used to facilitate understanding and communication rather than to identify messages most likely to motivate or persuade publics (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). The research and communication feedback channels allow for changes in behavior within the organization and among the publics.

The two-way symmetrical model is grounded in a concept of communication exchange bases on mutuality and cooperation. According to Grunig and Hunt (1984) and Kelly (1998), the communication values and principles of the two-way symmetrical model are most likely to yield organizational excellence. Rather than persuasion as a fundamental principle, negotiation is used to address issues

with internal and external publics and mutual understanding is the foundation of this model. On the basis of the tenets of collaboration, negotiation, conflict resolution and balanced communication, this model is dependent on donor negotiation and agreement with the organization's mission, purposes and services.

The historical evolution of the four models of fundraising (press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical, two-way symmetrical) defines the practice of fundraising and provides the basis for any examination of university advancement or fundraising function. Kelly proposed that press agency is the preferred model for nonprofits, but that the emphasis of fundraising is shifting to the symmetrical concepts of relationship building, proper stewardship, and two-way communication. Despite the widespread use of the press agency/publicity model, Kelly (1991) considered the advancement officers of academe to be less likely to adopt the press agency model.

In Tindall's (2007) empirical study of fundraising at public HBCUs, she found that HBCU fundraising offices engaged in a heavy usage of press agency model of fundraising. The findings of this study also indicated that HBCU fundraisers are inclined to use a mixed-motive model of fundraising that incorporates asymmetrical and symmetrical tactics to meet the needs and demands of their alumni donors. On the basis of the original explication of the fundraising models (Kelly, 1991, 1995) and recent studies examining fundraising communication (Tindall, 2007; Waters, 2009a,b), the researchers created the study's first research question

to explore how HBCUs carry out their fundraising efforts:

RQ1: What models of fundraising are most often used by HBCU fundraisers?

Research has shown that fundraising can take on many shapes and sizes at institutions of higher learning, ranging from tightly managed centralized offices to having multiple, loosely connected development units across the same campus (Underwood and Hammons, 1999; Hillman, 2002). Although research has not examined university fundraising offices, it has shown that throughout other divisions of higher education centralization often leads to reduced feelings of micromanagement and increased feelings of professional satisfaction and responsibility (Ferlie *et al*, 2008). Elder (2010) felt that fundraisers needed to retain a certain level of independence and control in their cultivation and solicitation activities to be successful and that highly centralized offices often reduce those feelings. Given the variance in size and structure of HBCUs and their fundraising and alumni relations offices (Betsey, 2008; Tindall, 2009), the researchers created a second research question to explore the impact of fundraising centralization:

RQ2: Does office centralization have an impact on the incorporation of the models of fundraising into HBCU fundraising efforts?

Organization–public relationships

Within public relations literature, relationship management has emerged

as the leading theoretical perspective for the discipline. This theory maintains that solid, productive relationships with an organization's stakeholder groups can be cultivated over time through specific strategies designed to demonstrate an organization's transparency and accountability. Relationship management theory finds its roots in a paper by Mary Ann Ferguson (1984) in which she called for public relations to focus its study on the relationship that exists between an organization and its publics. She proposed that the unit of study be the relationship rather than the communication that flowed between the two partners, which has traditionally been the focus of public relations practice and scholarship.

For nearly 15 years, public relations scholars ignored Ferguson's suggestion that greater social scientific understanding of public relations would come from the scholarly pursuit of the role of relationships in organizational efforts. However, Hon and Grunig (1999) created a succinct measurement scale for organizational-public relations (OPR) after reviewing interpersonal communication literature. The scale for measuring relational quality outcomes consists of four constructs – control mutuality, satisfaction, commitment and trust. This has become the commonly accepted way of measuring the OPR (Ledingham, 2006).

The first dimension of relationship quality, control mutuality, involves the balance of power. Termed control mutuality by Hon and Grunig (1999), this component seeks to evaluate which party has more power over the other. Power exists in any relationship, and the parties involved are usually

sensitive to which side exhibits and uses the power to gain control in the relationship. This power can involve influence over attitude and behavior.

The dimension of satisfaction serves to measure whether the parties involved have positive feelings about one another. Hon and Grunig (1999) note that 'a satisfying relationship is one in which the benefits outweigh the costs' (p. 3). Satisfaction has been one of the variables measured by numerous scholars, including Bruning *et al's* (2004) examination of city-resident relations.

Another dimension that is grounded in interpersonal relationships is commitment. This variable highlights the parties' beliefs that the relationship is worth the resources that are put into maintaining it. Hon and Grunig's scale contains measures of both attitude and behavioral intention. Bruning and Galloway (2003) report that commitment – the level of dedication to an organization – is a key component of OPR because it is fundamental to the public's attitude of the organization.

Finally, trust refers to one party's confidence that it can be open and honest with another party. Hon and Grunig's (1999) trust scale measures three dimensions, including integrity, which centers on the belief that both parties involved in the relationship are fair and just; dependability, which is primarily concerned with whether the parties involved in the relationship follow through with what they say they will do; and competence, which focuses on whether the parties have the abilities to do what they say they will do. Trust was an important component in the scale created by

Bruning and Ledingham (1999), and Coombs (2001) noted that public relations studies examining relationships were most promising when they have explored measures derived from interpersonal communication.

Studies have explored the organization–public relationship in a variety of settings. Specifically for fundraising, Waters (2008) found that major gift donors evaluate their relationship with nonprofit organizations more favorably than annual giving donors, and repeat donors valued the relationship more than one-time donors. Similar results have been found for volunteers (Waters and Bortree, 2010), association members (Ki and Hon, 2009), and consumers (Hall, 2006). Public relations scholarship has yet to examine the relationship measures with perhaps an organization's most important public, its employees. Grounded in the research outlined above, the researchers created the third research question:

RQ3: How do fundraisers at HBCUs evaluate their relationship with their employer?

Finally, the study wants to explore the relationship between fundraising models and the fundraisers evaluation of the organization–public relationship. Both the Excellence Study of public relations (Grunig *et al*, 1992) and Kelly's explication of the four models of fundraising (1995) argue that the most enlightened practitioners use two-way symmetry as their predominant model of practice. Public relations scholarship has argued that practitioners gain more professional fulfillment from using the two-way

asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models of practice. Given that the majority of HBCU fundraisers have used one-way models in previous studies (Tindall, 2007), the researchers posed one final research question to examine how fundraising practice influences the evaluation of the relationship with their fundraising institution:

RQ4: Does usage of fundraising models have an impact on how fundraisers evaluate their relationship with their employer?

METHODOLOGY

For this research project, the researchers used purposive sampling, which is a sampling method that intentionally seeks individuals or situations that will provide greater understanding of a research interest (Patton, 1990; Stacks, 2002). For this analysis of fundraising methods at HBCUs, the subjects within the sample were the fundraising staff at public and private HBCUs. Out of 400 persons invited to participate, 87 responded to the electronic questionnaire. The completion rate for the interview component was 21.8 percent, which is comparable to most electronic surveys (Sheehan, 2001; Kaplowitz *et al*, 2004). Several school officials declined to participate, citing lack of staff, limited knowledge and expertise, and disinterest in the project. The survey items on fundraising models were adapted from Kelly (1995). To measure each of the four models, Kelly designed statements that explained how nonprofit organizations practice donor relations. The items were measured on a nine-point Likert

scale, where 1 indicated 'strongly disagree' and 9 indicated 'strongly agree.' The survey items on the organization–public relationship were derived from Hon and Grunig's (1999) landmark report on how organizational relationships can be measured.

Cronbach α values were found to be acceptable for the organization–public relationship indices as the values ranged from a low of $\alpha=0.84$ for trust and $\alpha=0.86$ for commitment to a high of $\alpha=0.94$ for satisfaction and $\alpha=0.95$ for control mutuality. The reliability for the models of fundraising. Although the two-way models met accepted values for reliability ($\alpha=0.81$ for asymmetry and $\alpha=0.70$ for symmetry), the one-way models were not as reliable as press agency had the lowest value of all the scales ($\alpha=0.56$) and was followed closely by public information ($\alpha=0.63$). These last two values, however, are not uncommon for relatively new and untested scales (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). Aside from Kelly's (1995) original study, the scales have not been published in scholarly journals. Tindall's (2007) work confirmed the presence of these four models in the HBCU setting using a qualitative methodology. Despite the moderate reliability of two of the fundraising models, the researchers carried out the statistical analysis using SPSS version 17.0.

RESULTS

Eighty-seven fundraising professionals completed our survey. Nearly one-fifth ($n=19$) of the participants did not provide any personal demographic information. The researchers attribute this to the possibility that some participants were reticent to discuss

employer issues, work environment and their levels of satisfaction. Some practitioners may have resisted submitting this information because of a fear and trepidation that their affiliation, title and job would be tied to their answers, although the researchers stipulated in our initial contacts and the consent documentation that the information would be confidential and only viewed by the researchers. The researchers acknowledge that this is a strong limitation for analyzing the results with demographic analysis; as a result, comparisons between gender, race and other demographic variables with organization–public relationship variables are not done with this dataset. That being said, it should be noted that the participants who did provide demographic information represented a wide range. Of the remaining 68 participants, 30 were male (44 percent), and 38 were female (56 percent). The mean age of the survey participants was 48.3 years of age with a standard deviation of 11.2 years. Of the 68 participants providing information on race, the majority identified as either African American or Black ($n=50$ or 73.4 percent), whereas the remaining 18 identified as Caucasian (26.4 percent). The participants worked at their current employer on average of 54.1 months; however, this should not be interpreted as only relatively new employees completing the survey as the standard deviation (55.3 months) reflects the many years of experience that others had at their current organizations.

The first research question explored which fundraising models were most often used by HBCUs with their fundraising efforts. Press agency was

the most often used fundraising model by far based on descriptive statistics calculated from the participants' data. Using the nine-point Likert scale, fundraisers expressed that they used press agency more than any other model ($m=7.03$, $SD=1.34$). Two-way symmetry ($m=5.94$, $SD=1.78$) and public information ($m=5.84$, $SD=1.40$) were next most used models of fundraising. Two-way asymmetrical fundraising ($m=4.78$, $SD=1.98$) was the only model to score below the neutral point on the scale, indicating that the fundraisers were not inclined to use research in their work.

The second research question sought to determine if having a centralized fundraising office on the HBCU campuses had an impact on which fundraising models were most often used. Of the 87 participants, 72 came from institutions with a centralized office while 15 came from institutions where fundraising was carried out by multiple offices on campus. To determine if the location of the fundraising office shaped fundraisers' communication styles, independent t -tests were conducted comparing the two groups. The results of the t -tests indicate that organizations with centralized locations were more likely to use press agency ($t=2.37$, $df=85$, $P<0.05$) and public information

($t=1.79$, $df=85$, $P<0.05$) and non-centralized fundraising offices were more likely to be involved in two-way asymmetrical research ($t=2.54$, $df=85$, $P<0.01$) and two-way symmetry ($t=2.06$, $df=85$, $P<0.05$).

The third research question examined how HBCU fundraisers evaluate the relationship that they have with their employer. Using the nine-point Likert scale to measure Hon and Grunig's (1999) organization-public relationship variables, the participants presented a very bleak picture of the HBCU-HBCU fundraiser relationship. Although the standard deviations demonstrate that there was significant variance in the relationship evaluation, all four relationship measures hovered around the neutral point of the scale. Trust ($m=5.85$, $SD=2.03$) and commitment ($m=5.73$, $SD=2.15$) were the two relationship quality indicators with the highest scores though they were not substantially greater than satisfaction ($m=5.64$, $SD=2.04$) or control mutuality ($m=5.41$, $SD=2.18$).

To investigate whether the neutral relationship evaluations were correlated with the style of fundraising communication that the HBCU fundraisers primarily used on the job, the researchers conducted a Pearson's correlation. As shown in Table 1, there

Table 1: Pearson's R correlation between fundraising models and relationship quality evaluations

Fundraising models	Relationship quality indicators			
	Trust	Satisfaction	Commitment	Control mutuality
Press agency	-0.25 ($P=0.022$)	-0.34 ($P=0.001$)	-0.26 ($P=0.016$)	-0.32 ($P=0.002$)
Public information	0.13 ($P=0.241$)	-0.08 ($P=0.483$)	0.09 ($P=0.369$)	-0.170 ($P=0.117$)
Two-way asymmetry	0.29 ($P=0.007$)	0.36 ($P=0.001$)	0.31 ($P=0.004$)	0.30 ($P=0.004$)
Two-way symmetry	0.45 ($P=0.000$)	0.52 ($P=0.000$)	0.46 ($P=0.000$)	0.51 ($P=0.000$)

Pearson's R correlation (P -value).

were moderate correlations between fundraising style and relationship evaluation. HBCU fundraisers that used the press agency form of fundraising were more likely to have negative correlation with relationship quality. Interpreting the table shows that as the incorporation of emotional manipulation increased with fundraising tactics and communication, the evaluation of the relationship decreased. Conversely, as fundraisers began using two-way strategies – either asymmetrical or symmetrical – in their daily activities, the higher the fundraisers viewed their relationship with their employer.

DISCUSSION

The aims of this project were two-fold: to examine fundraising models and to understand how practitioners perceive the relationships with their employing historically Black college or university. On the basis of the data, there is a significant relationship between the models practiced at the institution and how fundraisers perceive their personal relationship with their institution and the fundraising/development function.

The first research question examined the use of the four fundraising models at HBCUs. The findings indicate that the overwhelming majority of HBCU fundraising offices continue to rely on press agency/publicity model of fundraising. This finding is consistent with Tindall's (2007, 2009) studies of HBCU fundraising. The next most practiced models were the two-way symmetrical and the public information models. The two-way symmetrical model is the polar opposite of the one-way models that the HBCU fundraisers most often use in their fundraising practices.

Theoretically and practically, the underlying basis of the press agency model is the emotional manipulation of donors to present the organization in a positive light. Through the creation of campaigns centered on the emotions (for example, appealing to alumni memories of campus activities), HBCUs may not be benefitting from rich, detailed dialogues and conversations with their donors, may lack insight into the true motivations for donors, and thus may suffer obstacles to successful fundraising, especially from alumni. Symmetrical fundraising is grounded in the concepts Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins (2003) outlined as key antecedents that motivated alumni to give to HBCUs: personal engagement with fundraisers; trust in the institution; 'tangible, concrete causes' (p. 21) linked to giving; true accountability and stewardship. For HBCUs, Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins also noted the need for HBCU fundraising materials to highlight how alumni have the ability to give back and to uplift the race. Perhaps one reason why one-way communication channels dominate HBCU fundraising is due to the limited number of staff. Kelly (1995) found that the majority of fundraising offices had five members or fewer, and Brittingham and Pezzullo (1990) stated that large programs with adequate staffing and sufficient fiscal support 'provide the resources for larger and better research on and records of donors, better personal contact with prospective donors, solicitation of a higher percentage of alumni, and stronger programs of institutional promotion' (p. 23). As Tindall (2007, 2009) found, the small staffs and small budgets at HBCUs made it difficult to

accomplish what larger staff and budgets can accomplish. The lack of employees dedicated to the function creates a 'small shop' operation that focuses on doing annual fund tasks (for example, direct mail and telephone solicitations) rather than activities that will lead to a more sophisticated development office (for example, researching donors and prospective donors and cultivating organizational relationships). Descriptive data provided by the study participants reflect these assertions and the findings from other researchers.

Two-way symmetrical fundraising is grounded in the concepts of mutuality and cooperation in communication exchanges. The least selected model was two-way asymmetrical, which is a model dedicated to persuading donors to give through research-derived messages. The goal of this model is to understand motivations and behavioral patterns of donors to match the needs of the donor with those of the institution. The lack of this model in practice confirms Tindall (2007), who found that the two-way asymmetrical model was not how the public HBCU fundraising officers classified their institution's practice of fundraising. One reason the high usage of one-way models may be the widely held assumption between publicity practices and effective public relations and fundraising. Limited formal fundraising and public relations education and training of HBCU advancement officers due to a lack of institutional resources may affect fundraising at many institutions. The lack of a public relations or communication background, which serve as the theoretical grounding for Kelly's (1998) fundraising theory, may

contribute to the heavy reliance on one-way models.

A lack of resources invested in a basic research program can be detrimental to long-term fundraising success. All too often, fundraising solicitations are too strongly focused on the organizational needs using the voice of the organization's management (Nichols, 2004). HBCU fundraisers must work to secure input from the donors they are attempting to solicit in terms of what messages are most resonant using focus groups, interviews, and casual conversations. From their interviews with HBCU advancement staff and donors, Gasman and Anderson-Thompkins (2003) made the same recommendations of listening and engaging with donors, especially alumni. Before the staff creates fundraising messages and appeals, they caution staff to 'think about the language that you use, what it really means Test brochure language and phone solicitation scripts with alumni focus groups before spending time and money on them' (p. 33). In addition, HBCUs must do more to ensure that alumni are being targeted with solicitations about programs that actually interest them and are not solely based on the current needs of the institution. In an ideal scenario, the donors' interests and the organizations' needs are in alignment; but more often than not fundraisers have to work to resolve these differences through one-on-one conversations and relationship cultivation strategies. Based on the current study, there are not as many conversations and symmetrical behaviors occurring among HBCU fundraisers, as there should be according to Kelly (1998).

The second research question sought to explore whether the centralization of the fundraising office on HBCU campuses influenced how the fundraising practice was carried out. Although this study did not measure institutional size to preserve total anonymity of the participants and cannot make assertions about its influence on the study's results, it did find that centralization influenced fundraising practices. Fundraising scholarship has suggested that micromanaged centralized units were less likely to engage in frequent conversations (for example, symmetrical model of fundraising) in their efforts (Meyers, 2006; Elder, 2010). This study confirmed these claims and found that campuses that relied on a centralized development office were more likely to use one-way fundraising models than decentralized offices. With a bigger structure in place, HBCU organizations with a centralized office may be limiting their fundraising successes. Often times in higher education fundraising, centralized departments result in boundaries being drawn in regard to who can approach certain prospects for solicitations (Elliot, 1995; Marcy, 2004). In centralized departments, the fundraising management team frequently assigns specific units to cultivate relationships with donors so that multiple fundraisers are not contacting the prospect. By providing a single point of contact for fundraising communication, however, its subparts are often unable to truly capitalize on alumni loyalty to individual programs rather than to monolithic institutions. In addition, the presence of a centralized fundraising department has been linked to less

active participation by individual academic units in fundraising, which could explain why one-way communication strategies were used more often by the centralized HBCU fundraisers rather than two-way communication (Grunig, 1995). These boundaries appear to be present on HBCU campuses as well based on the current study's findings.

Centralized departments, meaning that there is a sole department and figurehead for the campuses' fundraising efforts, were more likely to use the press agency and public information models. Meanwhile, the participating HBCU organizations that did not have a centralized office were more likely to be engaged in two-way symmetrical behaviors, such as face-to-face conversations with donors, special events and other situations where conversations can be had to learn about donors' interests. Again, largely based on the descriptive data provided by this study's participants, HBCUs seem to have fewer fundraisers engaging with donors off-site when one office coordinates all the fundraising activities. However, when multiple units carry out fundraising efforts, there are more individuals venturing out and communicating about the organization. Centralization may be a prevalent model at HBCUs because of insufficient allocations to fundraising and decades of underfunding. In Tindall's (2009) research, she validated Brittingham and Pezzullo's (1990) claim that the funding apportionments given to the fundraising function, especially at institutions without strong giving traditions, dictated whether fund raising would be an effective component of the organization. If

HBCUs did not receive sufficient state, government or corporate funding, the money that is given to the school is shifted to mission-supported functions and academics, not the fundraising function.

HBCUs should consider enacting measures to encourage their fundraisers to further engage donors. Pursuing conversations with donors and taking time to get to know their interests and how they want to be reconnected to their alma mater may reduce short-term financial gains from fundraising campaigns because of the time needed to cultivate those relationships properly; however, the long-term benefits of donor engagement will outweigh the short-term losses.

The third research question examined how fundraisers evaluated their relationship with the HBCU at which they were employed. The purpose of this question was to understand how employees perceived their levels of satisfaction, commitment, control mutuality, and trust with the organization. Previous organization–public relations have found that donors (Waters, 2010), volunteers (Waters and Bortree, 2010) and association members (Ki and Hon, 2009) all found that their respective study participants evaluated their relationships with nonprofit organizations positively on all four relationship indicators. Sadly, most of the HBCU fundraisers did not evaluate their relationship with their employers highly. None of the four relationship indicators scored above the neutral point on the nine-point Likert scale. Numerous variables could be at play, ranging from institutional policies, employee–supervisor relations, and

simply discontent with the career choice. Given the more positive evaluations of stakeholder relationships in previous studies nonprofit-oriented studies, the researchers did not expect to see employees evaluate the relationship as neutrally as they did. On the basis of the data, many practitioners viewed their positions as jobs with limited freedom to pursue understanding of their key audiences, to establish enthusiastic dialogue with audiences, or to shift organizational thinking in response to donor wants and needs. These practitioners were relegated to writing about the organization rather than being an organizational advocate.

The fourth research question sheds some light on the negative evaluation by the fundraisers. Two statistically significant findings emerged from this question. First, fundraisers who use the strategies of the two-way symmetrical model evaluated the employer relationship more positively than those practitioners who used one-way models. Second, those practitioners who considered the predominant models used in their offices as press agency/publicity and public information evaluated the relationship less favorably.

The difference in the models may be related to the dialogue and relationship-focused strategies of the two-way symmetrical model. Kelly (1995) argued that ‘a professional could practice the two-way symmetrical model as it requires practitioners to get outside the organization’s mindset in order to help it reach mutual understanding with important publics’ (p. 191), and this finding demonstrates this: Fundraisers who implemented the

two-way symmetrical model were engaged with donors via focus group or conversation, and that engagement and involvement with donors will allow them to see the fruition of their efforts. Those practitioners who are corralled into cubicles and churn out annual giving letters and fixing grant applications may not see any results since they are not active participants in the engagement of donors (Kelly, 1998).

CONCLUSION

With this research project, the researchers attempted to understand the dynamics of fundraising at historically Black colleges and universities. The answers to the four research questions provide a clear scope of the trials and triumphs facing HBCU fundraising offices, and the results provide several applications for practitioners and scholars alike.

Practitioners can use the study to identify the weak points in their development operation, to identify better methods of communicating, to improve the status of the advancement office, and to strengthen the fundraising function. Scholars could study how communication with donors and other constituents can be improved, where the fundraising operation fits into the structure of higher educational institutions, and if minority-serving institutions conduct fundraising in a different manner and/or different environment than predominately White institutions.

These suggestions, however, should be weighed carefully given the study's limitations. The reliability measures of the four fundraising models are also

less than desirable in social scientific work. Therefore, it is possible that the models that reflect engagement and research are being used more than indicated by the survey findings.

Ultimately, the biggest weakness of the study concerns HBCU participation.

The study suffers from a low response rate (21.8 percent), so it is difficult to generalize the findings to the entirety of the nation's HBCUs. The research team received several emails from participants stating that there was nothing to be gained from participation in the study. While fundraising has been a career that has been passed down from one generation to the next through apprenticeships and on-the-job training, scholarly research is boosting the impact of fundraising significantly (Sargeant, 1999; Sargeant and Jay, 2007; Waters, 2009b). Without future participation in scholarly research by HBCU fundraisers and the support of HBCU fundraising offices, the fundraising intricacies for this educational subsector is likely to remain unknown.

Directions for future research

The roles and models of fundraising explain the ways organizations practice fund raising and how practitioners are assigned responsibilities, but the models and roles do not describe or define why organizations practice fund raising in a certain manner. Therefore, it is imperative to look critically and empirically at the structures, systems and beliefs of HBCU administrations and management and its impact on the practice of fundraising. The leadership of an organization can influence the way fundraising is practiced. In her research on the

impact of organizational leadership on fund raising, Kelly found that the dominant coalition significantly influence the practice of the three asymmetrical models. Researching the organizational structure and the leadership's attitudes toward fundraising will provide clarity as to why certain fundraising communication styles are preferred by organizations and used by the fundraising staff.

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