



h Brakeley Briscoe Considering Philanthropy

International Fundraising – Is Your Institution Ready?

by Robert Markley

Bob Markley, Senior Consulting Associate, has joined Brakeley Briscoe after a career at Duke University managing their international fundraising programs in Asia.

Some universities are seeing 7 and 8 percent of yearly giving coming from international sources. Independent schools are seeing gifts of \$1 million and more from international families. Educational institutions' strategic plans increasingly emphasize globalization of curriculum, student experience, and enrollments. Advancement programs need globalization strategies too.

International fundraising isn't for every institution, however. Typically, it requires higher effort and expense than domestic fundraising. While it also often offers higher rewards, the market potential and willingness of your institution to invest over 3-5 years are fundamental to success. And any analysis of your risk/reward should consider the other educational program benefits that can mitigate these higher costs and longer term payouts.

Your international strategy should begin by targeting specific areas or regions. The number of alumni and parents that reside in the target area is basic to the evaluation. Historic fundraising data won't identify truly high potential donors as it would for domestic donors, so the numbers of constituents in a given area is the

critical determinant. Why? Generally, the culture and practice of philanthropy is less robust abroad, and this is especially so for philanthropy in support of education as many foreign prominent educational institutions are not at all privately funded. Additionally, our international constituents have not received the constant messaging making the case and justifying their support as have graduates of North American institutions. Dollar projections based on past alumni and parent giving records are therefore less relevant.

The next criterion is the willingness of your institution to undertake a higher cost and longer term results program. International major donors require the same personal attention, and sometimes much more than, domestic donors expect. This means committing to foreign travel, events, and communications programs that demand funding, as well as time and effort from major gifts officers, senior advancement executives, key faculty, and heads or presidents. Plus the capacity to cultivate and raise funds in different nations and cultures.

Pitch your program only after developing a thorough case for

internal institutional support that includes both fundraising and educational program benefits. Fundraising will eventually be realized, but the fundraising program should also be evaluated by accounting for educational program benefits. Your institution's international fundraising presence can not only increase dollar support, it will also establish an effective sourcing mechanism to recruit international students as well as inform a more global curriculum.

If your institution can account for all of the programmatic benefits and accept a longer-term payout, then chances are great that your fundraising program will be successful too.

Brakeley Briscoe can help you analyze the opportunities and plan your international fund raising program. Bob Markley will offer no-cost consultations at the upcoming CASE-NAIS conference in Austin, TX. Contact us to sign up or to set a discussion at another time. Email mbriscoe@brakeleybriscoe.com to set up a time with Bob Markley.