

Library+: Branding the Future

Combining Traditional Development Models and Non-Academic, Fan Behavior Theories
to Create a New Model for Institutional Library Fundraising and
Enhanced Campus Brand Equity at a Private University

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Dedication

I (Holly) dedicate this work to my father, Carl Jeffcoat, who passed away during the final year of this journey. He was an unwavering supporter of continuous learning and of all my life pursuits. I also dedicate this to my mother, Ann Jeffcoat, who understood my aspiration to finish despite our loss because she and my father instilled in me the dedication it takes to earn all I have achieved. To Dale Hendrickson, all my love for your encouragement, your support, and your patience always and especially during this academic pursuit. No dedication would be complete without mentioning the cats that graced my screen, walked on my keyboard, shed on my papers, and generally made lovable nuisances of themselves. Huge hugs and gratitude to the amazing Vandy cohort, especially Mayor Krauss, the happy hour “cool kid” crew, and my journey partner, Brad, for consequential and mind-shifting conversations – our work will transform the future. Drs., you are the best.

I (Brad) am beyond grateful to my family, cats included, for their unwavering support of another one of my “I think I want to do this” explorations to improve myself and expand my knowledge; the freedom and time to pursue this doctorate would absolutely not have been possible without you. I also want to express my enormous thanks and gratitude to my partner, Holly – the many, many months of time spent with you on this project and program combined fun, silly, ridiculous, and entertaining times, and countless inside jokes, with the highest-level of academic excellence; there is no better partner and friend I could have had on this journey. And, finally, many thanks to our cohort – amazing people, leaders, and now friends that made the challenges truly manageable and the successes truly collaborative.

I. Organizational Context

Academic libraries within universities of higher education in the United States rely on internal funds from tuition and other sources to offer the vital services, collections, and spaces for campus communities. The significant annual recurring funding is allocated to ensuring access to current research materials and the maintenance of extensive special collections and compensation of employees who provide essential information services to students, researchers, and oversee the care of the library's collections and facilities. The remainder of a typical academic library budget is allocated for various operational necessities, including technology, facility maintenance, and other related expenses. As cost of doing business increases across these areas, the demand for budgets to maintain, much less grow, while holding tuition increases at a minimum is a challenge.

Libraries, unlike profit-centric entities, represent investments in the future of education and knowledge dissemination. To respond to evolving campus needs and adapt to shifts in the market, especially in a competitive student recruitment environment, libraries must explore avenues to increase their annual budgets through non-tuition means. Institutional competition for university and donor funds is equally intense, and with the belief that donor desire to fund libraries has waned sufficiently, time spent on fundraising for typical library needs is often not seen as a valuable investment. Changing this trajectory in a manner that builds momentum and recaptures the desire to invest in campus libraries will propel efforts by librarians to be a crucial learning and research differentiator for students, faculty, and the greater community.

Partner Organization

Our partner organization, referred to throughout this report as Medium Sized Private University (MSPU), is a selective private liberal arts institution of higher education found in the southern United States. Founded in the early 20th century, the university offers a full range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs. The urban campus hosts approximately 7,000 undergraduates, 6,000 graduate students, and the university counts over 130,000 alumni worldwide. The Carnegie Foundation classifies the institution as R2, a high research activity enterprise, although it is on track to achieve R1 status in the next few years.

MSPU has a robust advancement and donor engagement strategy as shown by past successes in gifts funding capital improvements and an institutional endowment registered at over \$2 billion. The university is halfway through a ten-year capital campaign with a multi-billion-dollar goal,

which it expects to surpass. The current campaign is the third consecutive 10-year campaign led by the same university president and the second led by the Vice President of Development and Advancement Affairs. The first two campaigns met and exceeded set goals, setting up a comprehensive and trusted method for campaign operations and strategy for a defined donor base.

The current campaign goals highlight three areas of need: empowering outstanding students; enhancing campus and community; and enriching teaching and research. The expansive nature of the goals offers many ways to contribute to enriching campus by supporting student scholarships and experiential opportunities, expanding graduate and doctoral fellowships, sponsoring faculty research to address important societal challenges, strengthening athletics, and modernizing campus facilities.

Our capstone partner organization is the MSPU office of development and advancement affairs (DAA), the principal division leading strategy and services in the areas of fundraising, alumni engagement, marketing, communications, media and community relations, alumni and donor records, and public events and lectures.

Reporting to the university president, the Vice President of DAA (VP of DAA) and the Assistant to the Vice President for Strategic Affairs (AVP for SA) have agreed to be our capstone contacts. Our partners are central to affecting the campaign's strategy and operations and all major communication to donors such as campaign updates, stories, and websites.

Partner Organization Focus

MSPU DAA orchestrates a defined level of development support for most major campus areas. This includes a dedicated development officer and assistant, access to major and principal gift teams, prospect research reports, and prioritization of goals during campaigns, among other shared infrastructure. The academic and athletic areas each manage a dedicated campaign committee that reports up through the campaign leadership.

The level of service is dependent on donor interest and willingness to fund campaign priorities. In the last campaign, DAA gave the libraries wrap-around support consisting of a full-time development officer, assistant, and campaign committee. The libraries barely reached the stated fundraising goal. Between the last and current campaign, the MSPU President and VP of DAA decided that the effort for libraries outweighed the return on resource investment. The new ten-

year campaign does not include a dedicated campaign committee for libraries or a full-time development officer.

Why this is important: Library Needs

The libraries balance centrally budgeted tuition dollars with endowment earnings to operate facilities, provide services, and manage general, digital, and special collections. Collectively, MSPU Libraries employs 110 FTE staff members across a range of specialized functions. The annual budget, inclusive of staff, collections, and operating expenditures approaches \$18 million per year.

The breakdown of tuition funded versus endowment funded collection expenditures approximates 5:1 each year. Endowment funds are unevenly distributed across library types and functions, and most are restricted to donor specified uses such as collecting in defined subject areas. Fundraising supplements growing gaps in the continually increasing cost of acquiring, processing, and delivering access to material resources, capital improvements related to the essential services and collections, provision of regularly updated technology for functional areas and collection infrastructure, support for professional development and job-training, and investing in new initiatives that further the aspirational success of the university and its community. Without recurring gifts or increase of tuition-based funds, the library will need to reduce service offerings, cut collections, refuse gifts-in-kind collections, limit staff training, and stop innovating to preserve funds for core infrastructure and operations.

Development Support

While the libraries are closely affiliated with campus academic units, the Dean of MSPU Libraries is the primary leader of library-related fundraising activity for most libraries. The libraries employed a full-time development officer and an assistant until 2015 when all development activities moved to a centralized model under DAA. The libraries now share a development officer with other units within the Academic Affairs division. A stated reason for sharing the development position rather than assigning a single officer is past difficulty in securing elevated levels of donor interest resulting in financial support.

Evidence of the disappointing return on development staff investment is the underwhelming results of the last campaign. In *Campaign II* (2006-2015), library efforts raised just under \$17 million dollars, split among endowments for collection acquisitions, an endowed position, and

funds for main library renovations. While a considerable sum overall, the amount necessary for a much-needed renovation to the main library did not materialize, requiring added internal funds to complete the project. The expended effort to secure funds outpaced the return and led to the belief that libraries, without a clear donor base, are a difficult sell.

Friends of the MSPU Libraries

The Friends of the MSPU Libraries is a registered 501(c)3 fundraising group with the sole mission to raise awareness of the libraries within the community and to generate contributions to the library through memberships and donor events. Established in 1971, Friends is successful in bringing new people into the library orbit, many of whom were not previously affiliated with MSPU as students or employees. In a university setting with fundraising focused on alumni populations, Friends is a critical generator of goodwill and new relationships. Friends organizations are common among academic libraries, although often with mixed results.

According to internal data, Friends produced an average annual return of \$44,000 over the last 30-year period. The Friends dispense funds to library staff through a grant request process. Total grant levels range between \$10,000 - \$40,000. Two full-time library staff dedicate 50% of their time to management of the Friends organization and related activities.

II. Problem of Practice

The challenge is the perception of library fundraising as a difficult endeavor, particularly in a fundraising model that heavily emphasizes alumni giving. Furthermore, libraries are regarded as the lifeblood or heart of the institution, suggesting that their funding should ideally come from within the institution itself rather than relying on external donors. This situation forms a self-perpetuating cycle wherein the university recognizes the inherent value of libraries but struggles to effectively communicate this value to potential donors. As a result, the cycle persists, leading to unmet expectations.

Lacking comparative data or examples of innovative library fundraising models and creative approaches, the university's advancement division has not prioritized library needs, instead focusing on more tangible offerings. It is important to highlight that neglecting to establish a comprehensive, donor-engaging strategy for enhancing library development poses a risk of falling short of meeting the expectations of students, faculty, and researchers regarding library collections, facilities, and services. Also, it diminishes opportunities for expanding the institution's outreach to the larger community, thereby affecting the university.

Focusing on effective, integrated donor strategies can also help alleviate the financial burden on students through reduced reliance on tuition dollars, addressing a major institutional concern.

The challenge is the partner's experience of library fundraising as difficult and hard to "sell" in a model that focuses heavily on alumni giving. Additionally, libraries are seen as an essential "lifeblood" or "heart" of the institution thereby suggesting funding should come from within, not from donors. It is a vicious cycle where the university understands the core value of the libraries but finds it a difficult value to sell to donors, so then there is no value creation, the cycle continues, and expectations are not met. Consequently, without comparative data or exemplars of new or alternative library fundraising models or creative approaches, the advancement division has not prioritized library needs in the face of other, more tangible, offerings. It is important to note that not creating a comprehensive, donor-engaging strategy for increasing contributions to the library development risks falling short of student, faculty, and researcher expectations for collections, facilities, and services, and reduces opportunities for new forms of growth and outreach from the institution to the larger community, which would then affect the university. Attention to successful,

and integrated, donor strategies can also alleviate demand on tuition-dollars, which is also a major institutional concern.

Through our conversations with key stakeholders including: the Advancement Strategy Team, university president, VP for advancement, library dean, and development officers, we learned that there is interest in knowing more about peer and aspirant fundraising and development for libraries to inform future strategy. Questions raised by the partner representatives include understanding more about the following areas:

What is the current library fundraising landscape and data profile of MSPU and similar private institutions of individual and organizational donor type as well as donation purpose and type?

What do libraries “sell” that resonates with donors? What characteristics of library offerings and stated needs resonate across multiple donor affiliations? What is the perceived library brand image and equity across campus?

How can we improve upon the value proposition for MSPU Libraries to attract new donors and motivate those donors to give more? What methods and experiences can be adapted from other content and fan industries and applied to donor engagement and fundraising within the library ecosystem?

Answering these questions sets a foundational landscape from which our partner organization can better gauge the state of library fundraising at peer and aspirant institutions. Understanding the landscape answers one piece of the stated concern. Application of a valid conceptual framework to donor giving patterns by interest category affords added exploration into developing a new giving strategy. Through answering these questions, we believe there is an opportunity to develop “fans” for libraries and their collections. By evaluating and changing the overall value chain between universities, libraries, donors, and the community, we believe universities can rethink the definition of “library” and “collection” and “visitors” and thereby develop a new, and replicable, model for institutions, which will benefit all stakeholders within this critical ecosystem.

III. Review of Literature

State of Fundraising and Philanthropy in Higher Education and Libraries

Raising funds to support higher education initiatives in the United States dates to 1731 when Harvard received from a non-alumnus its first endowed professorship in Divinity (Drezner, 2019; Thelin & Trollinger, 2014). Since then, donor philanthropic interests and methods of giving have influenced a wide range of campus initiatives, facility construction, and staffing support (Thelin & Trollinger, 2014). In the last 30 years, academic fundraising has increased annually by an inflation-adjusted 3.6% and 175% overall (Shaker & Borden, 2020), with research areas at Carnegie doctoral level institutions experiencing the greatest growth in funding. Kaplan (2022), reporting Council for Advancement and Support of Education summary findings for 2021, estimates donors gave \$53 billion (about \$160 per person in the US) to higher education, an inflation-adjusted 5.1% over 2020. Foundations (33%) and alumni (23.2%) were the largest contributors, with just over 61% pledged to current operations and the remaining 38.4% for capital purposes.

While broad support for higher education is experiencing year-over-year growth, voluntary support of academic library current operations experienced negative growth as a percentage of giving to higher ed between 2008 (1.1%) to 2018 (0.6%) (Shaker & Borden, 2020). CASE data for 2021 show libraries at the same 0.6% level (Kaplan, 2022). The overall low distribution of gifts to libraries led to CASE removing the category from the Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) survey in 2022 along with Public Service and Extension and Operation and Maintenance of Plant. The inverse is the trending growth in research, academic divisions, student aid, and athletics (Shaker & Borden, 2020). Understanding shifting donor sentiment among competing campus interests will help library and institutional leaders reframe the strategic approach taken for fundraising success for libraries.

Conceptual Frameworks for Fundraising and Philanthropy

Academic Libraries

Library reliance on the beneficence of patrons and steady municipal revenue is covered in historical treatments of the development of the modern library (Casson, 2001; Klinenberg, 2018; Oldenburg, 1999; Pettegree & Weduwen, 2021). Libraries have long experienced generous patronage, building the celebrated collections, facilities, and endowed positions that library patrons enjoy today.

Despite the ubiquitous reliance on external funding streams to augment local budgets, explorations of the library fundraising literature reveal a well described, if not well understood, landscape.

Numerous authors focused on academic library fundraising provide general descriptive overviews for practitioners but rarely delve into theoretical underpinnings of donor motivation (Butler, 2001; Danneker, 2011; Dilworth & Henzl, 2016; Dilworth & Heyns, 2020; Galyean, 2006; Huang, 2006; Kascus, 2003; McGinnis et al., 2022; Pritchard, 2011; Sked & Reid, 2008; Sootheran, 2014; Steele & Elder, 2000; Thompson & Jennings, 2009). Typically, authors describe the academic development framework and needed relationships for successful fundraising in general (Rader, 2000) or specific library types such as large public academic libraries (Dewey, 2006; Holley, 1996). Similarly, practitioners in public libraries (Yoda, 2008) and international public libraries (Maack, 1996), which are facing similar headwinds albeit with different stakeholder groups, cover related topics.

Beyond general descriptions of academic fundraising activities, authors offer case studies for best practices (Wood & Berger, 2014; Wynne et al., 2016), methods for online fundraising (Hazard, 2003), review major gifts and trends (Gonzalez, 2010, 2013), thoughts about increasing endowments (Foley, 2005), general overviews of perceptions of/by development officers (Lorenzen, 2012; Noel Jennings, 2006) or provosts (Robertson, 2015) and perceptions of credibility (Staines, 2009), along with working with staff (Doan & Morris, 2012; Whitchurch & Comer, 2016), Friends' groups (D'Andraia et al., 2011; Holt, 2005; Houff Shields, 2004; Lowman & Bixby, 2011), and advisory boards (Houff Shields, 2004). Some specifically focus on alignment with alumni (Smith, 2012) and collaboration with sports teams (Neal, 1997).

Rarely mentioned in the library literature is revenue generation, thereby implicitly suggesting that libraries are beholden to institutional budget allocations and funds resulting from donor engagement. A few authors from outside the United States (Boadi, 2006; Ghalavand et al., 2022; Okojie, 2010) and a few within (Atlas, 1994; Cuillier & Stoffle, 2011) have considered ways in which libraries can sell services or spaces, although the revenue is minimal at the scale required to affect meaningful change.

The library literature pertaining to fundraising suggests a localized approach. With notable exceptions (Dilworth, 2021), author practitioners offer lessons learned, case studies, analysis of trends, or similar. The perception is that library leaders and development professionals must simply work harder at strategy, focus more on offerings to entice donors, or hold more

opportunities for engagement with librarians, collections, and speakers. Missing from the conversation is an exploration of library fundraising through well-established conceptual frameworks in use in other fields of study.

Higher Education

Essential to shoring up diminishing state support, rising tuition rates, and competition for research dollars across academia, philanthropy is considered a required activity at private and public institutions alike. Inquiries into understanding donor motivation have grown alongside the increased focus on raising funds (Bennett, 2019). Philanthropic giving to academic institutions is a special branch of the fundraising literature (Alphin Jr. et al., 2016; Brody et al., 2021). Theoretical investigations include social network analysis to examine relationships and connections among individuals and organizations to gain insights that can enhance chances of success (Haddad, 2021); identity-based fundraising used to mirror social identities in efforts to appeal to subsets of potential donors in the campus landscape (Drezner, 2018); and original grounded theory explorations of “relationship fundraising” through progressing levels of relationship development (Shaker & Nelson, 2022). Alumni motivations to give cover typical to atypical affiliations such as distance learning, underrepresented groups, socio-economic status, and gift timing to name a few (Casey & Lorenzen, 2010; Garvey & Drezner, 2019; Kundzina & Rivza, 2020; McNamee & Drezner, 2022) as well as considering more practical aspects such as staffing (Kozobarich, 2000) and involving staff in fundraising efforts (Beer & Cain, 2019; Crumpton, 2014). Ultimately, no one unifying conceptual framework or approach exists in the field. Common in the literature is, however, is mention of appealing to donor identity and affiliation, which led us to investigate social identity theory.

Social Identity Theory

The idea and concepts around social identity, behavior, and engagement across brands, channels, and communities have led us to ask if there is a different type of “fan-forward” relationship that can be explored, and potentially applied, between libraries and donors. Meaning, if libraries, institutions, and the donor community views this interrelated ecosystem differently from how it has been for decades, could there be greater opportunities for revenue generation and commitment to libraries that emerge from this reframing and change in messaging? To that end, we have focused on Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel et al., 1964) as the foundational academic theory for our evaluation and exploration of a potential shift in the library/donor model. SIT seeks

to explain the dynamics of intergroup behavior, the formation of social identities, and subsequent engagement between “group” and “fan” that reinforces individual action.

The central premise of SIT revolves around the notion of self-categorization, where individuals perceive themselves not only as unique individuals but also as members of larger social categories. Tajfel posits that individuals categorize themselves and others into social groups based on shared characteristics, leading to the development of an in-group and out-group distinction. He suggests the classification process is an innate and fundamental aspect of human cognition, allowing individuals to derive a sense of self-esteem and positive distinctiveness through identification with a particular social group. In-group members, sharing common characteristics, are seen as part of the individual's social identity, leading to feelings of solidarity and a tendency to favor the in-group over the out-group. On the other hand, out-group members are perceived as different and are often subject to stereotyping and prejudice to maintain the positive social distinctiveness of the in-group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), the social categorization process can be influenced by a range of factors, such as social norms, cultural values, and situational cues. Furthermore, the strength of identification with a particular group can significantly affect intergroup behavior. Elevated levels of group identification may lead to increased intergroup bias, as individuals strive to enhance the status and esteem of their in-group compared to out-groups.

SIT supplies a comprehensive framework from which we can understand intergroup dynamics and social identities at work in both campus and donor culture. Further, the recognition that identities engage in self-categorization and group identification pushes us to consider how SIT influences the socially and individually based decisions to donate funds to one area rather than another when presented with investment alternatives. Furthermore, it speaks to the desire of in-group power to raise awareness, allegiance, and garner support of the in-group fundraising cause.

Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE)

The Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) conceptual framework conceived in the early 1990's describes key components of a brand that interplay with consumer sentiment (e.g., awareness, associations, quality, loyalty) (Aker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Later research with CBBE and social identity theory applied to the sports marketplace (Underwood et al., 2001) provides us with a

valuable tool for examining the interplay between social identity theory and consumer or fan engagement within a university campus community. CBBE as an extension of social identity theory helps us apply brand components to the formation and maintenance of our identification with certain brands in the consumer marketplace.

As depicted in Figure 1 (Underwood et al., 2001), CBBE with SIT suggests consumers, or in the context of our study, "fans," attribute personal value and advantages to one brand over another along a service identification continuum. This continuum is predicated on the degree of personal identification with a brand, which hinges on its perceived relevance within the continuum. The 'fan' plays a pivotal role in terms of raising awareness, fostering loyalty, and influencing perceptions of quality for a brand. CBBE thus highlights the crucial significance of fans' viewpoints in raising the relative importance of a brand's market performance and competitive positioning. Some parts of the marketplace appear less "fan worthy" based on passion for the service. Dry cleaners will rarely, if ever, eclipse the level of identification with actors, musicians, or sports teams.

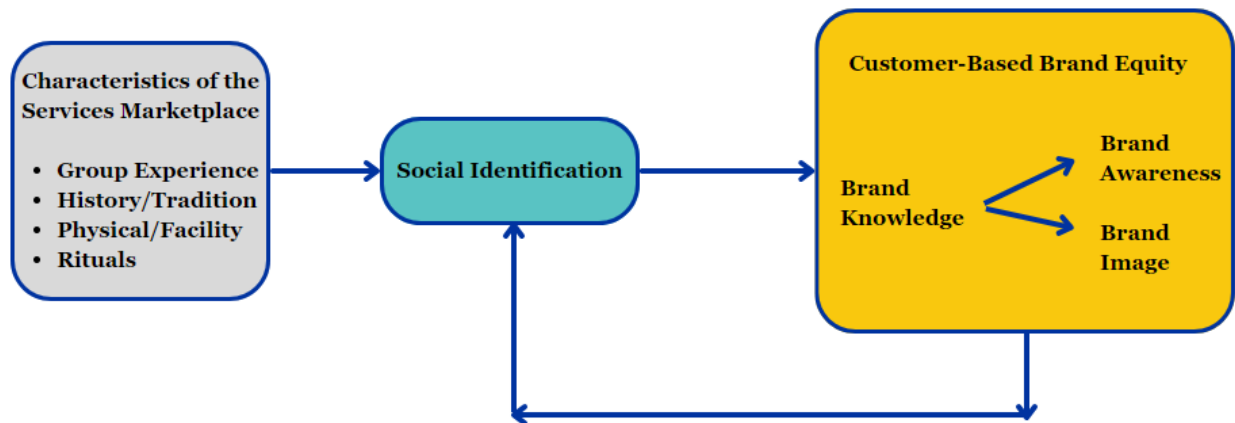
Figure 1. Services Identification Continuum



For service brands, such as those in sports markets and libraries, which offer a combination of services and tangible items or experiential offerings, CBBE entails the process of augmenting the unique value and advantages that a service brand embodies within the perceptions and experiences of its customers or enthusiasts. As depicted in Figure 2, also from Underwood (2001), CBBE represents the culmination of characteristics of the marketplace (e.g., group experience, history/tradition, physical/facility, and rituals in sports) plus social identification of in- and out-group behavior that is informed by the CBBE components within brand knowledge. Brand knowledge works reflexively with social identification revealing how groups continually assess their affiliation and acceptance of brand components such as brand awareness, perceived service quality, brand loyalty, and overall brand resonance. In this sense, CBBE plus SIT underscores the pivotal role of the group in shaping the market success and competitive positioning of a service brand. Consequently, it assumes principal importance in our approach to identifying growth

opportunities, redefining brand image, and enhancing value within the dynamic interplay between the "brand" (such as a library) and its "fans" (e.g., donors).

Figure 2. Social Identity and Consumer-Based Brand Equity



Brand Equity

Brand equity plays a pivotal role in the context of CBBE. When we use the term "brand equity" it refers to the intangible and measurable value that a brand possesses, stemming from the perceptions, associations, and experiences held by consumers and stakeholders. It signifies the premium or differential advantage a brand enjoys over its competitors due to factors such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and overall brand image. Brand equity encapsulates the cumulative effects of a brand's strategic marketing and its ability to influence consumer choices, foster brand loyalty, and generate sustainable competitive advantage in the marketplace (Keller, 1993, 2008).

Components of Brand Equity

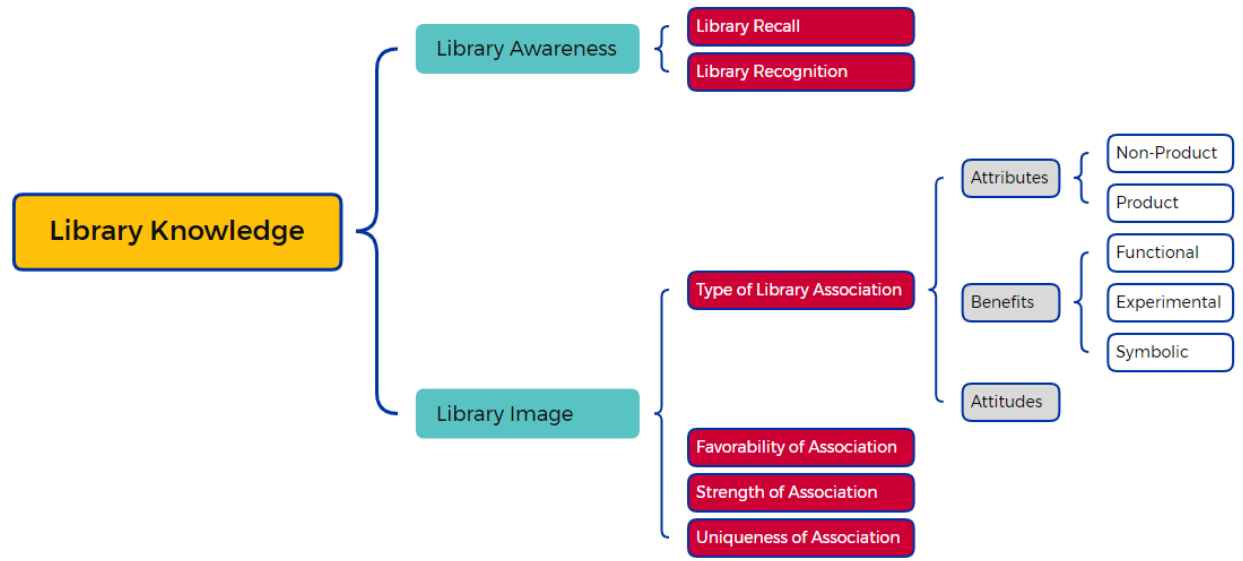
Brand Knowledge

In Figure 3, we position academic libraries within Keller's (1993) "dimensions of brand knowledge" framework, serving as an organizational structure for exploring subjective traits. In this framework, library knowledge is constructed upon awareness and image, which include elements such as recall, recognition, associations, attributes, benefits, and attitudes.

Critical to this inquiry, component knowledge of a modern academic library is varied. People strongly recall historical versions of the library from their experience, either while attending university or of their current public library. Essential to understanding the potential library value

chain for donors is reflecting on the enduring image of the library which may or may not mirror current services and offerings. Operationalizing Keller’s dimensions of brand knowledge in terms of a modern academic library allows us to examine donor understanding in terms of library awareness and image.

Figure 3. Dimensions of Brand Knowledge



Library Awareness Dimensions

Brand awareness assesses a consumer’s ability to retrieve brand-related information from memory under varying conditions. Brand awareness is conceptualized through *recall* and *recognition* dimensions. Brand recall pertains to a consumer’s capacity to recall the brand when presented with the product category, a crucial factor in decision-making amid numerous choices. Brand recognition relates to a consumer’s ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when the brand itself is presented as a cue.

Brand Image Dimensions

Brand image is a multi-dimensional concept defined as “perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory (Keller, 1993).” Measuring brand image involves evaluating the *types*, *favorability*, *strength*, and *uniqueness* of brand associations. The interaction between these dimensions shapes the brand image, knowledge, and the brand equity that consumers tap into when making purchase decisions.

Brand associations encompass *attributes*, *benefits*, and *attitudes*, describing the brand's features, personal values, and overall evaluation. Attributes can be either external or internal to the service, while benefits can be functional, experiential, or symbolic. Favorability is shaped by comparing the attributes and benefits provided by the service. The *strength of brand association* considers how information about a service enters a customer's awareness and the duration of its retention. *Uniqueness* pertains to characteristics or attributes that set a brand apart from others.

Collectively, the components of consumer-based brand equity aligned with the social identity framework help us position how groups within the campus ecosystem may shape and redefine allegiance, and therefore donations, to an area while simultaneously placing that academic or service area within a continuum of service identification, which then influences donor decision-making. Thereby groups of donors apply a similar logic when forming their knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages associated with the library versus other areas requesting support. This ongoing evaluation, based on key campus marketplace characteristics and brand knowledge, solidifies in-group advantages and disadvantages, prompting groups to act in the best interest of some areas to maintain a desired social identity status.

IV. Project Questions

Our project questions seek to create a better understanding of the fundraising and comparative profile of the partner library with peer and aspirant institutions, to learn from professionals engaged with library fundraising what aspects of libraries resonate with donors within a campus environment and proposing strategies to leverage insights from content and fan industries to potentially augment donor engagement with the partner organization's library system.

To answer these questions, our work framed the academic library within the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) and social identity theory (SIT) framework. This framework is appropriate because it places the libraries within a known brand (MSPU) where the libraries struggle to promote awareness of fundraising goals and to secure donors who may identify with library goals because they either are unaware of modern library aspirations, or their attention is drafted elsewhere within the brand.

The CBBE/SIT framework provides the scaffolding to view library relevance in overall fundraising at the partner institution, relevant brand knowledge gaps, and the structure to identify key library characteristics that resonate with donor social identity. With the key characteristics identified, we can suggest methods that tap into and guide future fundraising activities that resonate with donor identity personas and increase the value propositions for campus libraries.

Conceptual Model

Key Variables: Conceptualization and Operationalization

In our approach, we view the campus as a marketplace for donors, like how a sports team fits into a larger spectrum of offerings. Our primary goal is to understand the donor affinity groups and the elements of our institution's brand that people connect with. This understanding enables us to effectively guide both potential and current donors towards specific opportunities for supporting the library within the closed campus ecosystem.

To apply these ideas in our study, our framework suggests a modification to Underwood's (2001) services continuum. This change involves incorporating campus funding areas, as shown in Figure 4, to clarify the relative identification with libraries by depicting key sectors within the campus landscape and indicating that libraries are positioned closer to the leftmost boundary.

Figure 4. Campus Identification Continuum



Social Identity and Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE)

The social identity of university donors is formed in multiple ways and over a life span, as evidenced by the numerous donor affiliation categories and multiple areas of giving across the university. Development strategies capitalize on natural in-group social identity-based belonging, such as school alumni status or athletic boosterism.

Generating interest of existing or new donors in supporting self or socially identified out-groups is counter to the core fundraising principle of matching donor interests with organizational need. The effort to acknowledge and encourage donor identification with opportunities outside natural in-group affiliation requires a nuanced and intentional strategy. Central to this strategy is isolating key market characteristics of libraries that appeal to a broad and self-aware donor base and require minimal donor education on the part of development personnel.

As applied to the social identity – brand equity model, we sought to find the key library characteristics that resonate with donors. We know from Underwood (2001) that the characteristics that feed social identification within a service market are unique to the market. For instance, in the sports marketplace, group experience, history and tradition, physical and facility aspects, and rituals, are vital. Interaction with market specific characteristics engages and reinforces in-group social identification, which is further engaged by learning about and investing in tangible and intangible aspects of the brand.

Our work aimed to compile a comprehensive list of key library attributes that resonate with donors. The compilation will serve as the foundation for leveraging social identification mechanisms to foster purposeful engagement, enhancing the library's brand equity within the campus community. As we recognize, purposeful engagement relies on a thorough comprehension of the brand equity model, encompassing aspects within the brand knowledge concept.

To employ brand equity, we framed the library brand in relation to and in competition with other campus brands for philanthropic attention and funding. The library brand exists within the campus marketplace, and the marketing effort is managed at several levels including the development organization, the campus libraries, and other university partners. The marketing strategy in this model is directly associated with brand visibility and positive financial outcomes.

Knowledge of the library brand is defined by multiple tangible and intangible aspects. Unlike commercial brands with distinguishable traits and design, the library brand has deep historical associations and is shaped by generationally defined personal experience, technological changes, and depictions in popular culture. The result is a highly subjective and individually developed brand knowledge. The term "library" is well known; however, cursory knowledge of the key characteristics that make up a modern academic library are less known.

To gain insights into how brand knowledge influences donor decisions regarding brand equity, we examined brand awareness and image, as well as their individual components, using Keller's 1993 "dimensions of brand knowledge" framework as our guide for data collection. Specifically, we assessed donor perceptions of academic libraries by considering aspects like recall and recognition within brand awareness and various aspects of brand image, including association types, favorability, strength, and uniqueness. This analysis helped us gauge the extent to which donors comprehend the library brand.

V. Project Design

Data Collection

We used three methods of data collection to answer our research questions: institutional and association data, a targeted survey with library leaders across multiple institutions, and one-on-one interviews with individuals from the entertainment and sports industries where successful engagement between brand and fan is significant.

Below are our foundational questions and data methodologies we have aligned to answer these questions.

Question 1: What is the current library fundraising landscape and data profile of MSPU and similar private institutions regarding individual and organizational donor type as well as donation purpose and type?

Partner Library Fundraising Data

To answer the first part of question one, we used partner supplied library revenue data. The data set covers 1977-2022 for the Friends organization and the three main university libraries. The data is organized by fiscal year and supplies detailed information about gifts, donors, purpose, and payment method. The data excludes three of the eight campus libraries, reflecting the former organizational structure that ceased in 2018. A data project underway to merge fundraising history across all libraries is incomplete, limiting this analysis to the former central libraries. Friends of the Libraries revenue is reflected in the totals and is available to all campus libraries. Establishing partner organization trends reveals patterns and elicits observations for direct comparison with other institutions.

Higher Education Library Fundraising Data

To add depth of understanding to question one, we analyzed data collected annually by CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) to compare partner fundraising performance alongside those of peer, aspirant, and aspirant+ institutions (Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, 2018). CASE is a nonprofit association that supports the fundraising and development work of advancement professionals at K-12 and post-secondary membership institutions. CASE conducts an annual Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) survey to document charitable giving in education. It collects aggregate level financial data by donor affiliation, area

supported, and institutional demographic information (e.g., region, degree granting status, enrollment, alumni count). CASE assumed management of the VSE in 2018 from the Council for Aid to Education, which had run the survey since 1957. Total respondents to VSE vary by collection year with a typical response rate of over eight hundred institutions reporting.

CASE Global Reporting Standards inform the counting and reporting definitions collected through the VSE. The Standards are developed and reviewed annually by CASE and member leadership. Reporting standards cover administrative structure, charitable giving by constituent type, and purpose of gifts. VSE collected library specific charitable giving until a 2022 survey revision eliminated the category (Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, 2023).

Our partner organization is a long-standing member of CASE. CASE data is proprietary and detailed reporting is acceptable for private use within the membership organization. We approached CASE data in two ways. First, we analyzed partner CASE data for the period 2003-2021 to gather long-term trends in giving by area across campus. Second, we identified peer, aspirant, and aspirant plus institutions that consistently supplied data to CASE in the years 2011-2021. The final grouping consisted of eleven (n=11) peers, nine (n=9) aspirants, and nine (n=9) aspirant plus universities for a total of 30 (n=30) institutions including the partner organization. We analyzed fundraising differences between groups in the areas of current operational and restricted endowment fund totals by gift type, campus area, enrollment, and endowment total.

Question 2: What do libraries “sell” that resonates with donors? What characteristics of library offerings and stated needs resonate across multiple donor affiliations? What is the perceived library brand image and equity across campus?

Administrator and Development Officer Survey

To answer question two, we surveyed three professional interest and membership group listservs for library administrators and library development professionals (described in the “Survey Population” section that follows). The survey was shared via email to all three groups with two weekly reminders sent after the initial posting. No incentives were offered. Several recipients reached out to inquire about distribution of results post-analysis.

Survey Population

Recipients of the survey invitation were current members of the ALADN (Academic Library Advancement and Development Network) list community, the G-14 Library Dean and Director

Group, and the GWLA (Greater Western Library Association) Dean and Director Group. Some direct emails went to partner institution peer and aspirant university library leaders. In total, the survey reached leaders in approximately one hundred academic institutions.

Survey Components

The survey consisted of four sections as set by the conceptual framework. First, the survey asked respondents their perception of library brand equity at their location. Brand equity is determined by library visibility in campus marketing efforts. The questions were adapted from concepts in brand equity operationalized by Keller (1993) and Watkins (2014) as influenced by Tajfel's (1964) social identity theory concept. The application of these concepts to library fundraising is new. No validated survey instruments exist; however, questions were developed based on suggested measures found in the brand equity articles.

Second, the survey sought to learn respondent views on library brand image. Similarly, these concepts do not appear in library fundraising literature. The work of Underwood (2001) guided the question development. Typically used to elicit customer images of service brands, Underwood applied the concept to the sports marketplace offering a pathway to develop questions for the library fundraising arena. No validated survey instruments exist. The questions in this section were based on concepts applied by Underwood and other researchers interested in evaluating social identity in service brands (Heere & James, 2007; Watkins, 2014).

Third, the survey asked respondents to identify library service, collection, and facility characteristics into three levels of appeal to donors. Appeal to donors refers to social identity and fan behavior. This section attempted to elicit feedback to answer the questions what libraries "sell" that attracts donors and thereby fans. Application of this conceptual framework to library fundraising is new. No validated survey instruments exist. Therefore, to capture this aspect we followed Underwood's (2001) example of asking the audience which aspects of sports involvement, or library offerings in our case, resonate the most with the fan experience. Respondents are experts in library fundraising and were able to reliably relay which areas resonate most or least with present donors.

Finally, the last section gathered institutional demographic and fundraising information about the respondent's university. The questions were repurposed here from library fundraising work completed by Dilworth (Dilworth, 2021), which built on the earlier work of Heyns (1994).

The survey ran for three weeks in July 2023. An invitation and two reminders were sent a week apart. Thirty-five complete responses were recorded; thirty-one were usable, for a response rate of 31%.

Question 3: What methods and experiences can be adapted from other content and fan industries that can be applied to donor engagement and fundraising within the library ecosystem?

Interviews with Brand Experts Outside Academia

To answer question three, we conducted four semi-structured interviews with experts from the music (n=2), brand management (n=1) and sports (n=1) industries to understand their perspective on, and approach to, fan engagement, defining a brand, and cultivating a fan base for revenue generation and commitment to a brand or initiative.

Participant Recruitment

Interviewees were recruited through a modified snowball technique based on their experience level and relationship to a professional network that includes one of the authors. Participants were asked to commit to at least 60 minutes and to allow recording for transcription. Of the five interviewees invited four participated. The fifth had scheduling conflicts during the collection timeline. No incentives were offered.

Data Collection

Interviews ranged from 60-75 minutes in length and were conducted over a two-week period in July 2023. Interviews were conducted using Zoom with both authors present. One author asked questions while the other took notes. We recorded the interview with Otter.ai for a later transcription.

Grounded in the identified and documented academic research of social identity theory and consumer-based brand equity, we conceptualized questions to tap into interviewee experience. The interviews consisted of a set of foundational descriptive questions that asked interviewees to give examples, speak to their experience, and provide specific grand tour answers that spoke to their understanding and use of brands. Additional job-specific grand tour and experience questions were created to elicit comprehensive responses about fan behavior and brand connectivity for each interviewee based on their unique roles and responsibilities within their organization.

Data Analysis

Our analysis included assimilation and evaluation of both the quantitative and qualitative data sources ensuring a holistic understanding of the critical variables from our data collection initiatives.

Question 1: What is the current library fundraising landscape and data profile of MSPU and similar private institutions regarding individual and organizational donor type as well as donation purpose and type?

Partner Dataset Analysis

Analysis of the partner data covering 1977-2023 answered the following questions:

- Count of gifts over time
- Gift value over time
- Fundraising trends by donor type
- Fundraising trends by gift type
- Fundraising trends by gift purpose
- Fundraising trends by Friends organization

We conducted the analysis in Excel using pivot tables and charting functions. We completed descriptive analysis for key areas and graphical analysis presentations of summary trend line data for library fundraising revenue over time by donor type, gift type, gift purpose, and by campaign timeline.

Council for Advancement and Support of Education Data Analysis

We extracted comparison group (peer, aspirant, aspirant plus) data from the CASE Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) annual survey for the years 2011-2021.

We used Excel to perform descriptive analyses of partner, peer, aspirant, and aspirant plus institutions to examine the same trends visualized for the partner dataset. We calculated means and standard deviations for each key variable: donor type, gift type, and gift purpose. We performed descriptive graphical analysis in the form of tables for mean, median, mode, and standard deviation information and stacked bar charts and/or trend lines to visualize differences. We collected trend data to inform questions about library gifts in relation to other university designated areas, library donor type in relation to other university designated areas, and library fundraising by institutional characteristics. CASE data definitions are available through the CASE website.

Question 2: What do libraries “sell” that resonates with donors? What characteristics of library offerings and stated needs resonate across multiple donor affiliations? What is the perceived library brand image and equity across campus?

We constructed and disseminated our survey using QualtricsXM, an online software platform. This software offers fundamental data analysis functionalities, enabling us to perform descriptive analyses, calculate means, and create graphical representations of the data.

The descriptive analysis consisted of conducting comparisons of means for each section of the survey. We searched for discernible patterns indicating differences in terms of respondents' understanding about donor knowledge about libraries and perceptions of the favorability, strength, and uniqueness of the library brand image on campus. We further explored mean variations of the key library characteristics that resonate with existing and potential donors. Finally, we examined variations in responses based on institutional demographics such as institution type, library size, and fundraising support characteristics. Graphical analysis of each section further aided visual inspection across response categories.

Question 3: What methods and experiences can be adapted from other content and fan industries that can be applied to donor engagement and fundraising within the library ecosystem?

Interviews with Brand Experts Outside Academia

Interviews were conducted over Zoom and recorded on Otter.ai to generate transcripts for interview analysis. Each transcript underwent thorough review to ensure transcription completeness and accuracy. Minor revisions were made to rectify any transcription errors after each interview session.

After completion of all interviews, we engaged in an inductive coding process. This involved a comprehensive examination of the interview transcripts to identify key words and concepts that yielded distinctive and valuable patterns and narratives. Leveraging our collective professional experience, we conducted a rigorous reflexive analysis of the transcripts, leading to the formulation of codes for analysis rooted in the conceptual framework and experiential insights into identity, brand engagement, and customer behavior. We used the Dedoose research data management and analysis tool to tag themes and codes for further evaluation. Additionally, we identified anecdotal examples within the transcripts for illustrative use in reporting. Codes were applied to excerpts and

then weighted based on contextual cues present in the excerpt to apply a broader perspective across results.

Viewing coded excerpts in the Dedoose SuperMegaGrid focused our understanding of interview content and provided a way for us to look for patterns and consistencies – or lack thereof – from the participants. The thirteen codes identified for analysis were: audience, authenticity, brand, culture, emotion, fans, identity, influence, integrity, marketing, perception, story, and strategy. Frequency identified code appearance counts were collected, along with frequency of code pairings. A code co-occurrence matrix exposed additional patterns of interview nuances that furthered our exploration as guided by our conceptual framework.

VI. Findings

Research Question #1

What is the current library fundraising landscape and data profile of MSPU and similar private institutions of individual and organizational donor type as well as donation purpose and type?

RQ1 Findings Summary

1. *The MSPU and comparison group library fundraising data reinforce the perception of low donor identification with the libraries within the campus fundraising ecosystem.*
 - a. *MSPU data indicates a high volume of small gifts – primarily by staff (payroll deduction), alumni, and Friends of the Libraries members and increased gifts in the form of capital, rather than endowment or current operations.*
 - b. *Gifts-in-kind represent the greatest capital increase gift type, identifying self-identified bibliophiles as more likely to donate collections than operational funds to support their upkeep.*
2. *Comparison group institutions experience the same, or worse, track-record in fundraising for libraries compared to other campus areas as evidenced by percentage of gift value in the campus ecosystem.*

Finding 1.1

The MSPU and comparison group library fundraising data reinforce the perception of low donor identification with the libraries within the campus fundraising ecosystem.

Examination of partner-provided data validated the perception that libraries are a more difficult area to raise funds than other, more identifiable, and relatable, areas in the campus donor ecosystem.

1.1.a. Partner Fundraising Trends

MSPU data indicates a high volume of small gifts – primarily by staff (payroll deduction), alumni, and Friends of the Libraries members – and increased gifts in the form of capital, rather than endowment or current operations.

MSPU has received more than 22,000 gifts (Table 1) totaling over thirty-seven million dollars (Table 2) for its libraries between 1977 and 2022, not counting a significant donation of capital and endowment funds received in 2023.

Count Total

Table 1. Gift Count to MSPU Libraries

<i>Count of Gifts to Libraries, 1977-2022</i>	
Mean	485
Median	490
Standard Deviation	336
Range	1,088
Minimum	4
Maximum	1,092
Sum	22,324
Count (Years)	46

Value Total

As seen in Table 2, the most frequent gift value was \$100, with a mode of \$60 and a mean of \$1,685, showing consistent, low-level gifts punctuated by larger gifts which raise the average amount.

Table 2. Total Value of Gifts to MSPU Libraries, 1977-2022

<i>Total Value of Gifts to Libraries, 1977-2022</i>		
Mean	\$	1,685
Median	\$	60
Mode	\$	100
Standard Deviation	\$	22,121
Range	\$	1,000,000
Minimum	\$	1
Maximum	\$	1,000,000
Sum	\$	37,613,611
Count (gifts)		22,324

Value and Count

Figure 4 displays both gift count (red line) and gift value for the years 1977-2022. The annual number of gifts increased steadily with a few dips until a pronounced decline that began after the last campaign ended in 2015 and fell more sharply at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of gifts has not recovered. Membership in the Friends of the MSPU Library organization has fallen, potentially accounting for a portion of the drop, suggesting the need for further investigation by the partner organization into reasons for the decline.

Figure 4. Total Gift Value (all gift types) and Count Over Time, 1977-2022

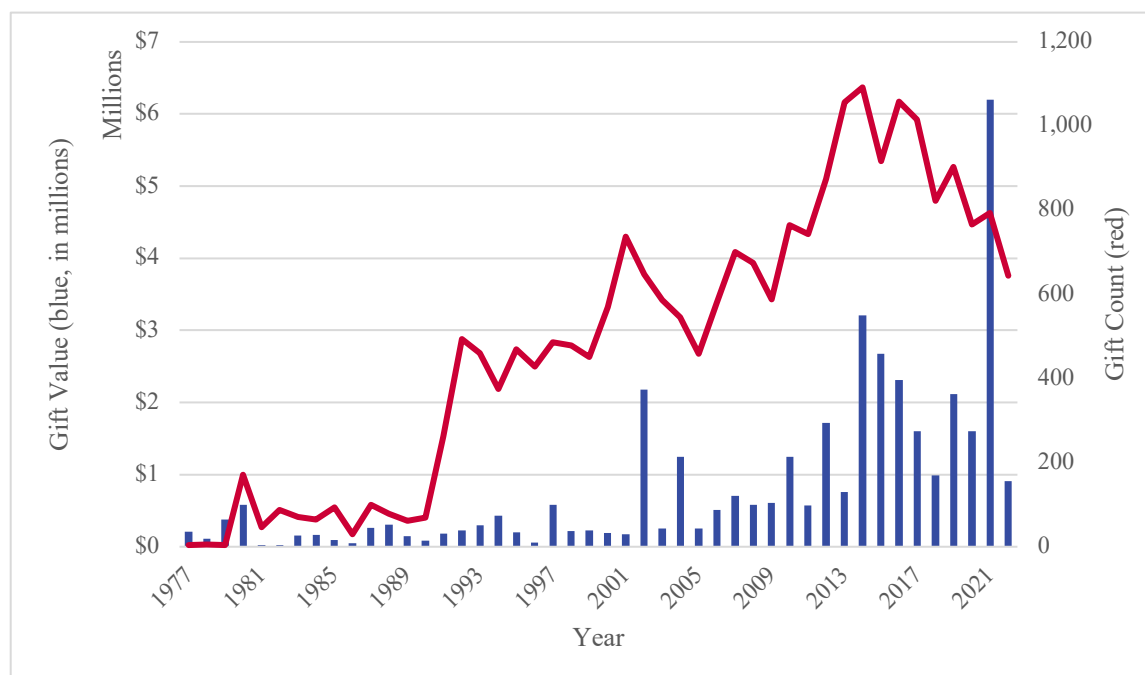


Table 3 shows the wide range of annual gift revenue. From a low of less than \$22,000 in the 1980's to a maximum of over \$6 million, the average year is more typically in the medium to high six figures. The steady growth of library gifts

Table 3. Total Annual Gift Value to MSPU Libraries, 1977-2022

<i>Annual Total Gift Value, 1977-2022</i>		
Mean	\$	817,801
Standard Error	\$	165,739
Median	\$	340,819
Range	\$	6,176,990
Minimum	\$	21,620
Maximum	\$	6,198,610
Sum	\$	37,618,848
Count (years)		46

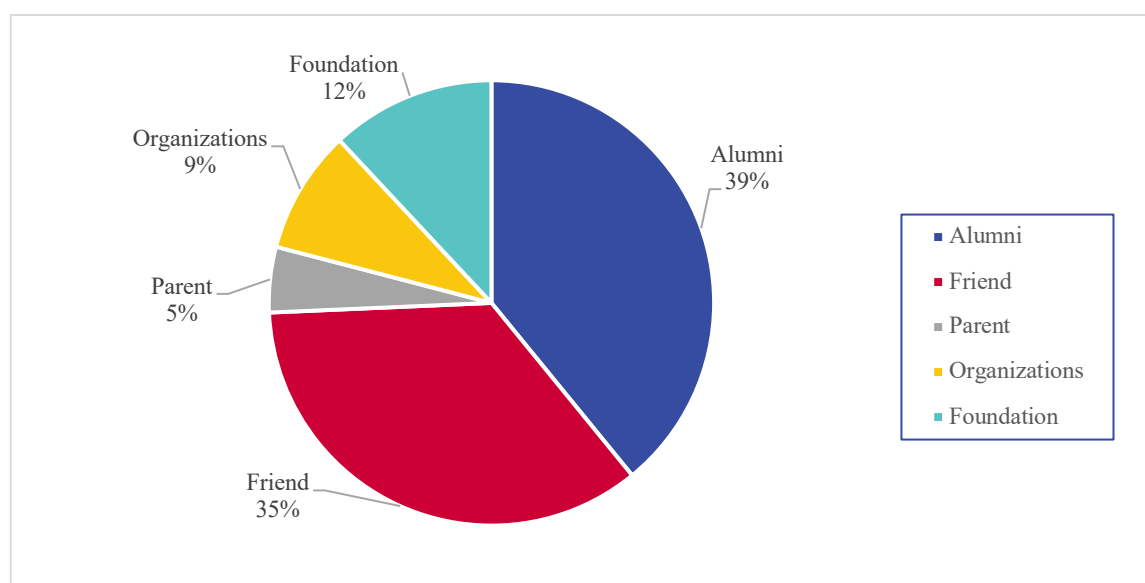
Donor Type and Value

As seen in Table 4, alumni account for 39% of gifts, followed by library friends, foundations, and parents, among others. Alumni are a reliable donor base for the libraries despite no students graduating with a library degree.

Table 4. Total Gift Value and Percent by Donor Type, 1977-2022

<i>Donor Type</i>	<i>Total Gift Value</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Alumni	\$ 14,709,528	39%
Corporation	\$ 1,039,512	3%
Foundation	\$ 4,497,213	12%
Friend	\$ 13,241,007	35%
Other Organization	\$ 2,328,789	6%
Parent	\$ 1,788,047	5%
Religious Organization	\$ 9,515	0%
Grand Total	\$ 37,613,611	100%

Figure 5 reveals the contributions by donor type in the last ten years (2012-2022), indicating little change in donor type in the last 46 years. Organizations and foundations are less than one-quarter of the overall gift value, while alumni, friends, and parents are the highest individual contributors.

Figure 5. Percentage Gifts by Donor Type, 2012-2022

The sizable percentage of gifts by “Friends” members merits attention and a further breakdown of member types represented within this group.

Friends of the MSPU Libraries

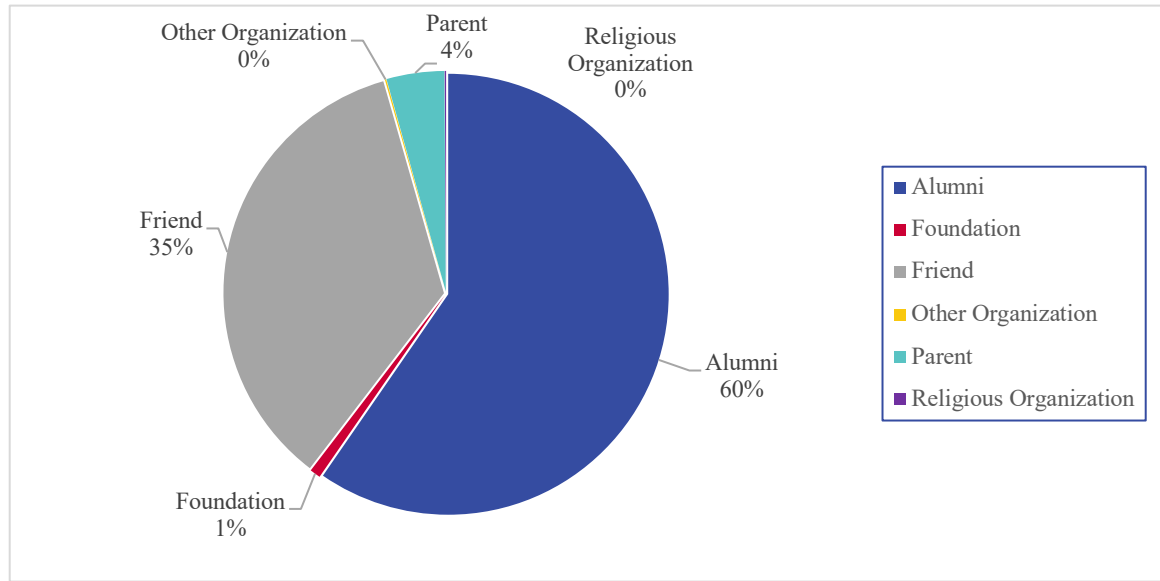
The Friends of the MSPU Libraries (Friends) is a 501(c)(3) membership organization affiliated with the partner organization libraries. Friends was founded in 1972 and has raised over \$1.8 million dollars since 1977 (earlier records not available). As seen in Table 5, mean annual revenue is just under \$50,000 with a one-time high of over \$140,000.

Table 5. Friends of MSPU Libraries Annual Revenue Summary, 1980-2022

<i>Friends' Annual Revenue Summary</i>		
Mean	\$	50,171
Standard Error	\$	5,599
Median	\$	38,407
Standard Deviation	\$	33,593
Range	\$	140,497
Minimum	\$	40
Maximum	\$	140,537
Sum	\$	1,806,140
Count		36 Years

Friends' programs and events raise awareness of the libraries and engage potential donors. Figure 6 shows the distribution of donor types. Alumni are the largest group (59%), followed by "Friends" (34%), and parents (4%). "Friends" are typically local community members as well as faculty and staff of MSPU. Confusingly, the same donor can donate as a Friends member to a Friends account or as an alum, for instance, to a different account. Clarification of donor designation is recommended.

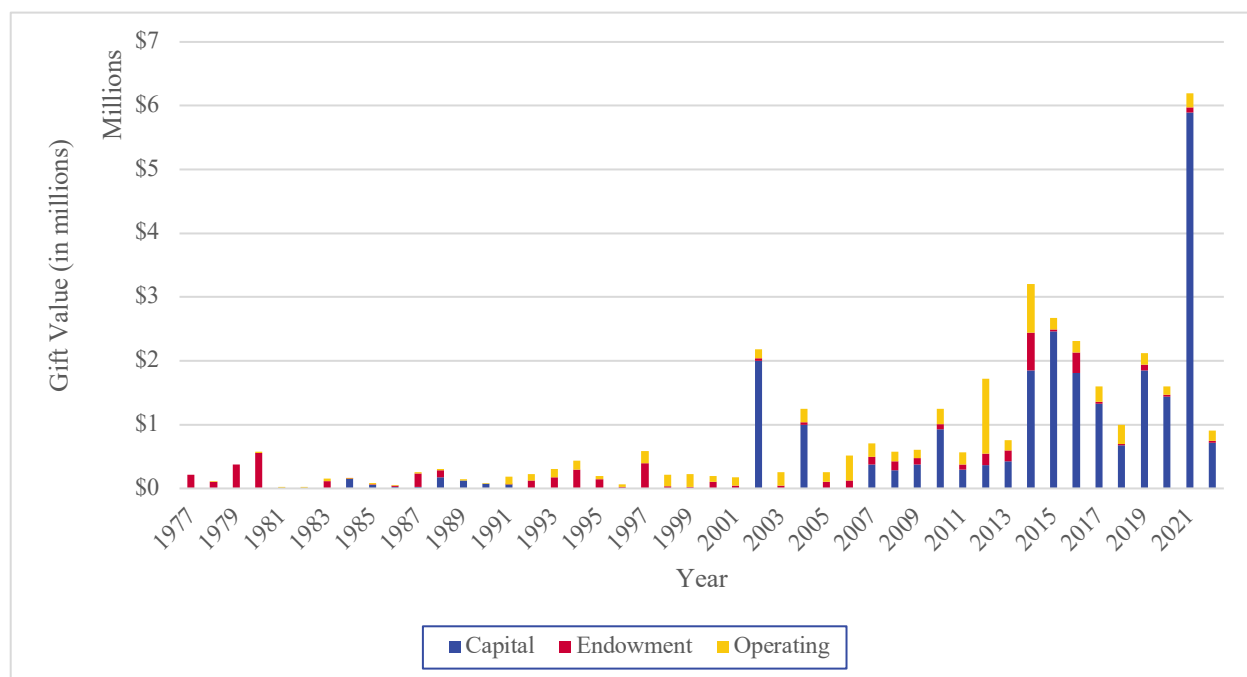
Figure 6. Gifts to Friends of MSPU Libraries by Donor Type, 1980-2022



Gift Type

Finally, beginning around 2003, a shift in gift type occurred. Gifts in the form of capital, either to support capital projects or gifts of materials, overtook endowment and current operations gifts as the highest value gift type.

Figure 7. Gift Value to MSPU Libraries by Gift Type, 1977-2022



The growth in value of capital gifts seen in Figure 7 occurred at the same time the volume of small-value current operations gifts increased leading to the finding that gifts-in-kind are a significant contributor to library fundraising totals.

1.1.b. Gift-In-Kind Growth

Gifts-in-kind represent the greatest capital increase gift type, identifying self-identified bibliophiles as more likely to donate collections than operational funds to support their upkeep.

Gift Type

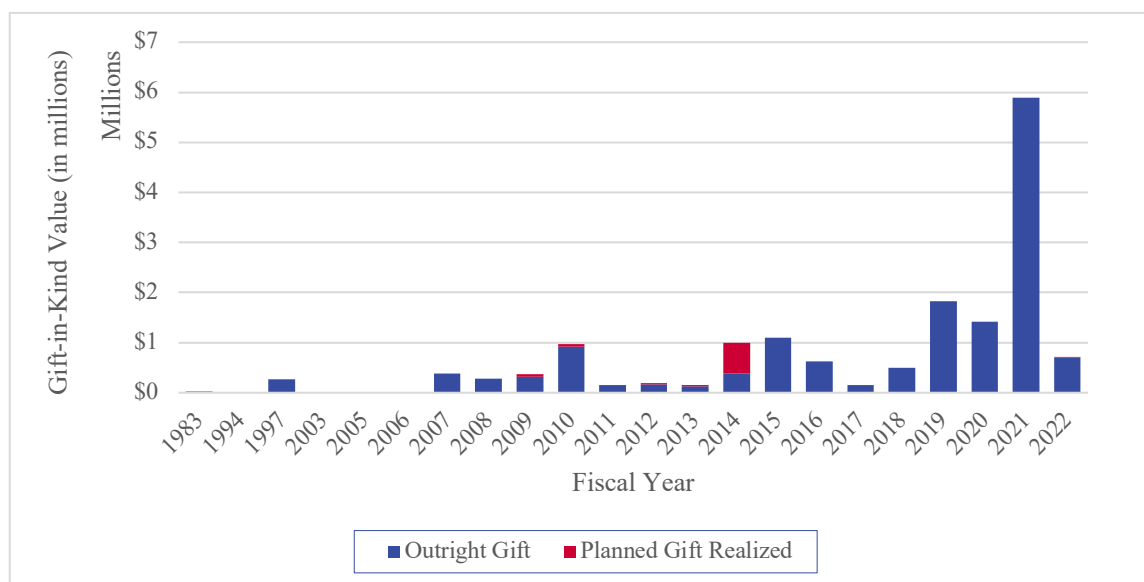
The partner organization internal data includes the Council for Advancement and Support of Education's (CASE) categorization of "reportable gift type." As evident in Table 6 under "Current Operations – Library," the largest quantity of gifts to MSPU Libraries is current operations and are in the form of Friends memberships and other small-value contributions. Capital gifts in the form of property, buildings, and equipment is a small number (970) that represents a significant value impact on annual gift levels.

Table 6. Gift Count to MSPU Libraries by CASE Reportable Gift Types, 1977-2022

<i>Count of CASE Reportable Gift Type</i>	
Capital Purposes - Endowment Restricted - Faculty and Staff	31
Capital Purposes - Endowment Restricted - Library	2,581
Capital Purposes - Property, Building, Equipment	970
Current Operations - Faculty and Staff	21
Current Operations - Library	18,997
Current Operations - Op and Maint of Plant	58
Total	22,658

A noticeable growth of gifts-in-kind (e.g., donation of materials of value, such as special collection items) began in 2007 as seen in Figure 8, which accounts for the overall increase in capital revenue gifts. The switch from endowment to capital in the form of gifts-in-kind may indicate a donor preference for offering material value instead of ongoing cash in the form of an endowment. Gifts-in-kind donors are primarily friends of the library (70%), alumni (18%), and parents (6%).

GIK (gift in kind) Growth

Figure 8. Gift-in-Kind growth over time by Gift Type, 1977-2022

As noted, gifts-in-kind represent a significant annual value that requires an equally significant matching contribution by the libraries in long-term stewardship of the gifted collections. It is not

clear in the data if the gifts-in-kind are accompanied by operational dollars or restricted endowments for their care. We recommend further exploration of return on value of gifts-in-kind for the library collection breadth and depth as well as researcher value. Understanding the value-add of the material may indicate opportunities for defining new identity-based donor support by self-described collectors or people who wish to support the maintenance and use of the gifts.

Finding 1.2

Comparison group institutions experience the same, or worse, track-record in fundraising for libraries compared to other campus areas as evidenced by percentage of gift value in the campus ecosystem.

Comparison Group Characteristics

Comparison group institutions range universities with small (<5,000) enrollment to large (>40,000). Table 7 displays enrollment averages over eleven years of VSE survey data (2011-2021) and average endowment market value reported in 2021. We averaged enrollment to account for sharp increases in enrollment figures during this period. The endowment average per comparison group is in 2021 dollars. All three comparison groups have higher enrollment figures and, with the exception of the cohort peer group, and have a significantly larger average endowment base.

Table 7. Average Enrollment (2011-2021) and Endowment Market Value (2021) by Comparison Group

<i>Comparison Group</i>	<i>Avg Founding Year</i>	<i>Avg Enrollment 2011-2021</i>	<i>Avg Endowment, 2021</i>
Aspirant Plus (n=9)	1847	16,944	\$ 8,074,271,579
Aspirant Peer (n=9)	1870	17,199	\$ 5,018,822,935
Cohort Peer (n=11)	1867	12,910	\$ 1,529,908,023
MSPU (n=1)	1911	12,308	\$ 2,037,181,719

Current Operations Funds

Analysis of comparison group (peer, aspirant, and aspirant plus) and MSPU fundraising data reported to CASE reveal similar levels of philanthropic activity for academic libraries. Data over the ten-year period from 2011-2021 presented in Table 8 show libraries at the bottom of all campus areas in attracting current operation revenue. Notably, MSPU brought in the highest percentage of Current Operations/Libraries revenue of any group. Student financial aid, athletics, and academic divisions garnered the first three spots accounting for over 80% of current annual dollars raised.

Libraries fared better in the restricted endowment category. MSPU performed better than the Aspirant Peer group and took in less than the other comparison groups. The difference is minimal, indicating MSPU is in line with peers and aspirants in this category. Academic divisions, student financial aid, and faculty and staff compensation reflect the campaign priorities in effect during this time and a general preference for these areas among MSPU donors. Table 9 illustrates the order of preference. Academic divisions are the tip of the fundraising spear at MSPU.

Table 8. Current Operations Gifts by Area and Comparison Group, 2011-2021

<i>Category</i>	<i>Aspirant Plus</i>	<i>Aspirant Peer</i>	<i>Cohort Peer</i>	<i>MSPU</i>
Curr Ops/Student Financial Aid	9.20%	10.13%	11.19%	32.31%
Curr Ops/Athletics	4.61%	9.40%	14.71%	27.99%
Curr Ops/Academic Divs	30.74%	45.22%	22.78%	20.68%
Curr Ops/Pub Serv & Ext	0.44%	2.28%	6.62%	6.86%
Curr Ops/Fac-Staff Comp	2.36%	1.31%	2.29%	6.84%
Curr Ops/Research	46.43%	28.67%	35.45%	4.14%
Curr Ops/Libraries	0.90%	0.45%	1.01%	1.04%
Curr Ops/Physical Plant	5.31%	2.55%	5.97%	0.14%

Restricted Endowment Funds

Table 9. Restricted Endowment Gifts by Area and Comparison Group, 2011-2021

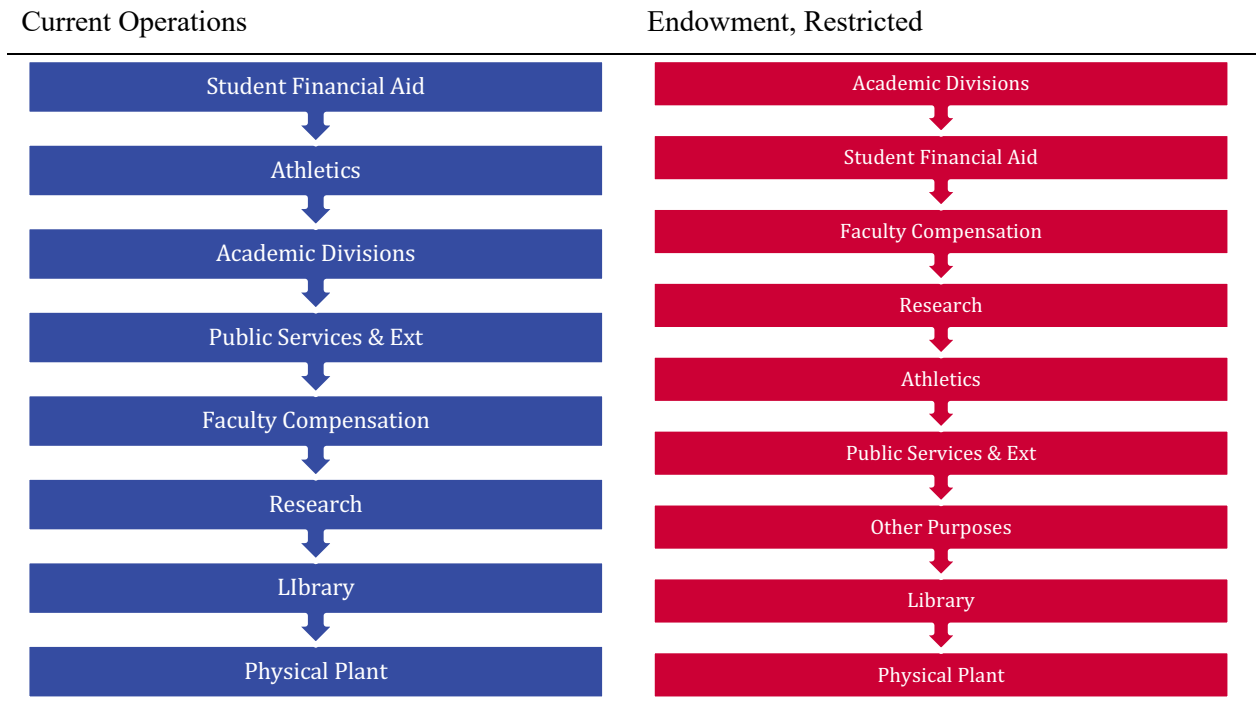
<i>Endowment Category (Deferred at PV)</i>	<i>Aspirant Plus</i>	<i>Aspirant Peer</i>	<i>Cohort Peer</i>	<i>MSPU</i>
ER: Academic Divs.	21.67%	18.61%	13.89%	38.63%
ER: Student Financial Aid	42.98%	34.16%	41.11%	35.20%
ER: Fac & Staff Comp	17.41%	13.13%	16.53%	15.11%
ER: Research	5.68%	6.82%	2.94%	5.14%
ER: Athletics	2.19%	1.83%	9.47%	2.66%
ER: Public Serv & Ext	0.08%	1.17%	0.79%	1.49%
ER: Other Purposes	8.46%	22.97%	11.29%	0.97%
ER: Library	0.68%	0.32%	0.57%	0.51%
ER: Op & Maint of Physical Plant	0.87%	0.98%	3.41%	0.28%

Campus Ecosystem Ranking

The data reinforces the low levels of donor gifts to current operations or restricted endowments across all comparison groups. MSPU performance is notably higher in current operations than restricted endowments. However, in terms of locating the library in the campus ecosystem “marketplace” and the associated social identity of the donor, student financial aid, academic divisions, athletics, and research outperform the library in all comparison groups. This suggests that the MSPU experience is not strategically or operationally different from their cohort, aspirational, or aspirants plus peers.

The findings also suggests that the campus identification continuum is accurate, with the library on the far left “low identification” end of the spectrum while student aid, academic divisions, athletics, and research are comfortably on the right “high identification” side (as previously seen in Figure 4). Figure 9 represents the spectrum for MSPU in current operations ranking (left) and restricted endowment rankings (right).

Figure 9. MSPU Campus Ecosystem



Research question #2

What do libraries “sell” that resonates with donors? What characteristics of library offerings and stated needs resonate across multiple donor affiliations? What is the perceived library brand image and equity across campus?

RQ2 Findings Summary

1. *Libraries offer significant value to a campus yet are perceived as having an inequitable share of attention in the predominant campus fundraising model and are undervalued by donors.*
 - a. *Library brand equity, as evidenced through brand awareness and image, is perceived by library fundraisers as less than equitable in a campus development environment.*
 - b. *Libraries are undervalued in brand favorability, strength, and uniqueness as perceived by library fundraisers, suggesting opportunities to capitalize on the value-add nature of libraries in achieving campus strategic fundraising goals.*
2. *The **key characteristics** of the library brand in the campus fundraising marketplace are donor and local special collections, funds for meeting student research and learning needs, building collaborative gathering spaces, and providing exclusive opportunities to interact with collections and scholars.*

Finding 2.1

Libraries offer significant value to a campus yet are perceived as having an inequitable share of attention in the predominant campus fundraising model and are undervalued by donors.

2.1.a. Brand Equity

*Library **brand equity**, as evidenced through brand awareness and image, is perceived by library fundraisers as less than equitable in a campus development environment.*

Brand equity for academic libraries is measured as the awareness by donors of the library as potential place to invest when presented with multiple options.

The first set of questions places the library within the campus fundraising ecosystem. Question sets were posed in a 1-5 “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” Likert format. As seen in Table 10, responses indicate strong agreement with the statements about well-defined and broadly shared library priorities. While agreement is neutral that university-level advancement is aware of the priorities, there is disagreement that those priorities are represented or promoted well at the campus level and thereby among potential donors. The results indicate a perceived bottle neck in amplification of library priorities.

As shared by one respondent, “[E]veryone has a library story, but not everyone thinks of donating to the libraries” or that it is “difficult to overcome the “repository of books” trope.” They are not aware of the “libraries story.” The stories exist within the library leadership and development officer’s reach, yet it is difficult to get the message across to potential donors in a way that raises awareness in a positive manner.

Table 10. Mean Awareness of the Library Brand on Campus

<i>Questions</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>
The library has well-defined priorities that reflect university fundraising goals.	3.85	1.02	1.04
The library has communicated well-defined priorities to university-level advancement teams.	3.67	0.91	0.83
The university advancement team is responsive to library development support needs.	3.39	1.28	1.63
University-level advancement teams are knowledgeable of library priorities.	2.88	1.37	1.86
Library priorities are highlighted by the university during campaigns.	2.45	1.23	1.52
The library is well represented in university-level fundraising materials (e.g., website, campaign materials, donor magazine, social media, etc).	2.45	1.30	1.70
University-level advancement teams promote library priorities in communication with potential donors.	2.42	1.33	1.76
Library priorities are well-known to a broad base of donors.	2.06	0.89	0.78

Reasons for the disconnect between library priorities and focused attention from central development vary from the incentive structure of development work to an openly fraught relationship with central development. Speaking to the structure, commentors relay that “[A]wareness [of library priorities] may be high, but collaboration is low - tracking and pay methods don't encourage collaboration.” Respondents report they “annually share our priorities with other campus units, which are mostly focused on their own priorities.” Despite sharing, “[I]t is hard to engage with University Engagement teams because so much of their work is reliant on college specific alumni and since we technically have no alumni of our own, we are often left out of conversations and strategic planning.” Lastly, a respondent points to lack of awareness or intention to help libraries as a barrier “[W]e do not have a development officer and struggle to gain traction with the advancement team.”

Unfortunately, some library representatives report negative perceptions and competitiveness within central development stand in the way. For instance, “[T]he Vice President for University Advancement does not value the library and has mentioned that it is obsolete.” Similarly, another observes, “[O]ur advancement office pits gift officers against each other competitively, which very negatively affects the library's ability to fundraise, as we are not seen as having alumni and alumni for colleges are claimed by individual gift officers.” Finally, “donors are interested in the library, but the competitiveness of our gift officers prevents us from fundraising in ways that are helpful. We have had more success with foundations, where the restrictions are easier for the library to fulfill.”

2.1.b. Brand Image

*Libraries are undervalued in **brand favorability, strength, and uniqueness** as perceived by library fundraisers, suggesting opportunities to capitalize on the value-add nature of libraries in achieving campus strategic fundraising goals.*

Brand image is composed of three conceptual areas: *favorability, strength, and uniqueness* of the brand. Responses indicate their agreement with statements on a 1-5 strongly disagree to strongly agree Likert scale.

Image Favorability

Table 11. Mean Perceived Favorability of Library Image

<i>Favorability Statements</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>
The library provides evidence of value for donors compared to other campus options.	3.84	0.99	0.97
The library is viewed favorably by donors when deciding where to contribute on campus.	3.58	0.98	0.95
The library is viewed favorably across all generations of donors	3.48	1.24	1.54
The library is viewed as a good long-term investment for donors compared to other campus options.	3.55	0.84	0.70
The library has a competitive edge over other areas in attracting donors.	1.74	0.80	0.64

As seen in Table 11, overall perceived favorability is average (3.2) when combined. Respondents believe cross-generational donors view the library favorably compared to other campus options when deciding where to contribute. Unfortunately, the library lacks a competitive edge when attracting donors (1.74).

One respondent summed up the paradox of library favorability and weak support by saying, “Everybody seems to like us, but they really just don’t understand all that we do, and they jump to conclusions that it is still about books.”

Image Strength

Table 12. Mean Perceived Strength of Library Image

<i>Strength Statements</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>
Campus donors strongly associate the library with fostering student belonging.	3.32	0.96	0.93
Campus donors strongly associate the library with fostering faculty success in teaching, research, and scholarship.	3.45	1.04	1.09
Campus donors strongly associate the library with fostering student academic success.	3.84	0.95	0.91
Campus donors strongly associate the library as a symbol of the intellectual life of the university.	3.87	1.07	1.14
Campus donors strongly associate the library as a provider of quality information.	4.23	0.87	0.76
Campus donors strongly associate the library with caring for special collections of interest to the community.	4.32	0.93	0.86

As seen in Table 12, overall image strength is high (3.84). Respondents most strongly agreed that donors associate the library with providing quality information and with preserving special collections of interest to the community. The library as a symbol of the intellectual life of the university, fostering academic and research success are also strengths of the library image. The least strong is the library’s role in fostering student belonging, indicating an area to emphasize (3.32).

Image Uniqueness

Table 13. Mean Perceived Uniqueness of Library Image

<i>Uniqueness Statements</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>
The library offers donors unique opportunities to support <i>student success</i> compared to other campus funding opportunities.	3.68	1.23	1.51
The library offers donors unique opportunities to support <i>faculty success</i> in teaching and research compared to other campus funding opportunities.	3.77	0.94	0.88
The library offers donors a unique opportunity to invest in the richness of <i>campus life</i> compared to other campus funding opportunities.	3.71	1.08	1.17
Campus donors would identify with the unique opportunities to support <i>faculty success</i> through library services and collections if promoted.	3.87	0.91	0.82
Campus donors would identify with the unique opportunities to support <i>student success</i> through library services and collections if promoted.	3.97	0.86	0.74
Campus donors would identify with the unique opportunities to support <i>faculty success</i> through library services and collections if promoted.	3.87	0.91	0.82
Campus donors would identify with the unique opportunities to support <i>campus life</i> through library services and collections if promoted.	4.00	0.93	0.87

The overall uniqueness of the library brand is high (3.84), as seen in Table 13. The gap between what is unique and what would be compelling is highest for student success (3.97-3.68=.29) and campus life (4.00-3.71=.29). The faculty success gap is the smallest at .10 (3.87-3.77), indicating little perceived movement in this area even if promoted.

Despite the uniqueness of opportunities, the library is seen as a core asset best supported by internal funds. One respondent shared, “[M]ost donors - alumni and non-alumni -- see Libraries fundraising as a campus duty v. Libraries as its own unique fundraising needs.”

Generational Differences

Respondents indicated the strongest connection with the Boomer generation in terms of awareness and favorability of the library brand image by generation. The Silent Generation ranked second and Generation Z – the current 18-22 student population – is believed to be the least aware. Alumni rank the highest in donor awareness of library priorities, followed by non-alumni, and parents. No explanation surfaced; however, the ages represented by the Boomer and Silent Generation groups tend to be the most active philanthropically due to their life stage of greater financial security

Understanding the movement of generations and what appeals to each age group is essential as time moves on and library opportunities age in or out of favor based on generational experiences with the academic library.

General Observations

Campus Brand Equity

Student aid, academic divisions, athletics, research, and student life top the respondents' ranking of campus areas by perceived favorability to donors. Libraries are number seven, after faculty / staff endowments and before unrestricted dollars. Respondent ranking in Table 14 closely matches the comparison group data as shown earlier in Figure 4.

Table 14. Rank of Perceived Favorability Across All Campus Fundraising Areas

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Campus Favorability Rank</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>
1	Student Aid	2.48	1.52	2.31
2	Academic divisions (e.g., Business, Education, Engineering, etc.)	2.55	1.24	1.54
3	Athletics	3.13	2.17	4.69
4	Research	4.71	2.04	4.14
5	Student life	6.00	2.37	5.61
6	Faculty / staff compensations (e.g., endowed, temporary, etc.)	6.10	2.08	4.35
7	Libraries	6.84	1.83	3.36
8	Unrestricted	6.97	2.90	8.42
9	Public Services and Extension	7.39	1.62	2.62
10	Physical plant operations and maintenance	9.10	1.51	2.28
11	Other purposes	10.7	0.91	0.84

Finding 2.2

2.2. Library Key Characteristics

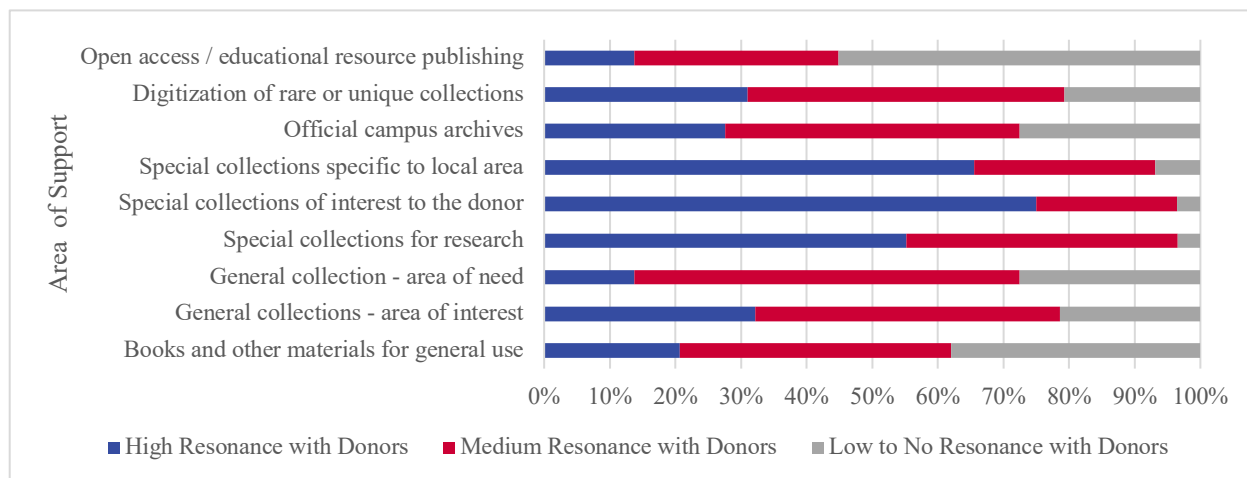
*The **key characteristics** of the library brand in the campus fundraising marketplace are donor and local special collections, funds for meeting student research and learning needs, building collaborative gathering spaces, and providing exclusive opportunities to interact with collections and scholars.*

Collections

We classified donor interests and priorities into three distinct levels. Each characteristic is displayed in a stacked bar representing the proportion of donor resonance registered for each characteristic listed. The percentages at the bottom of each figure total to 100% with high, medium, and low to no resonance with donors depicted along the scale in blue, red, and gray, respectively.

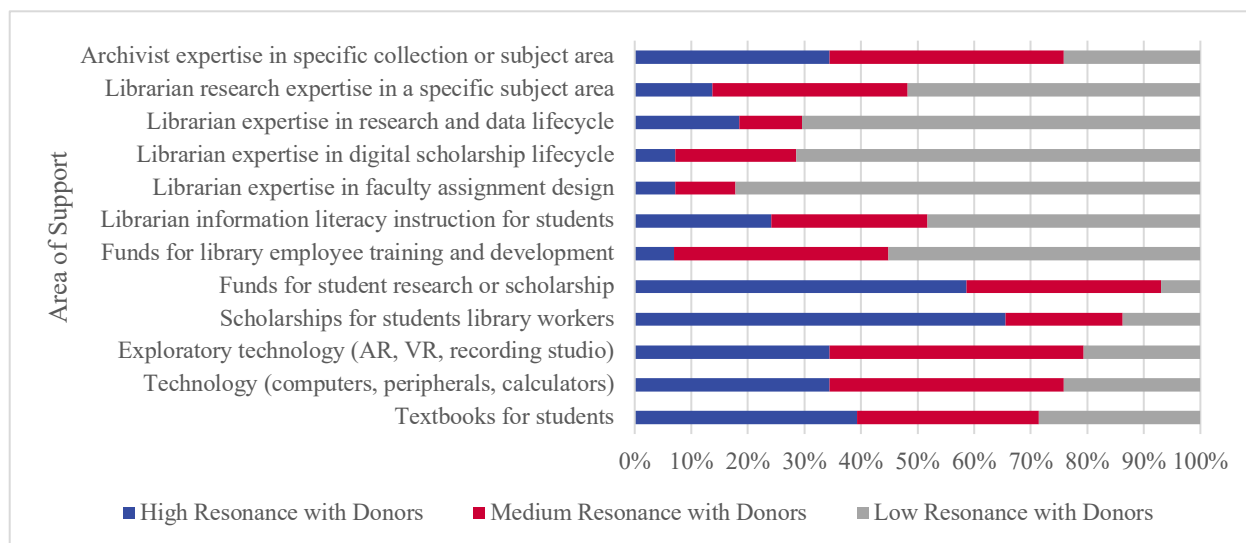
At the high resonance level, depicted in blue in Figure 10, special collections that have significant personal, local, or research-related value to donors were highly rated. The medium resonance category, denoted by red, included general collection needs, digitization of special collections, campus archives management, and improving accessibility for general-use collections. Finally, the low resonance tier, marked in grey, encompassed open access and open educational resources. In summary, special collections received the highest level of resonance compared to general collections, campus archives, digitization, and open access or open educational resource initiatives.

Figure 10. Characteristics of Collections by Donor Resonance Level



Student and Researcher Experience

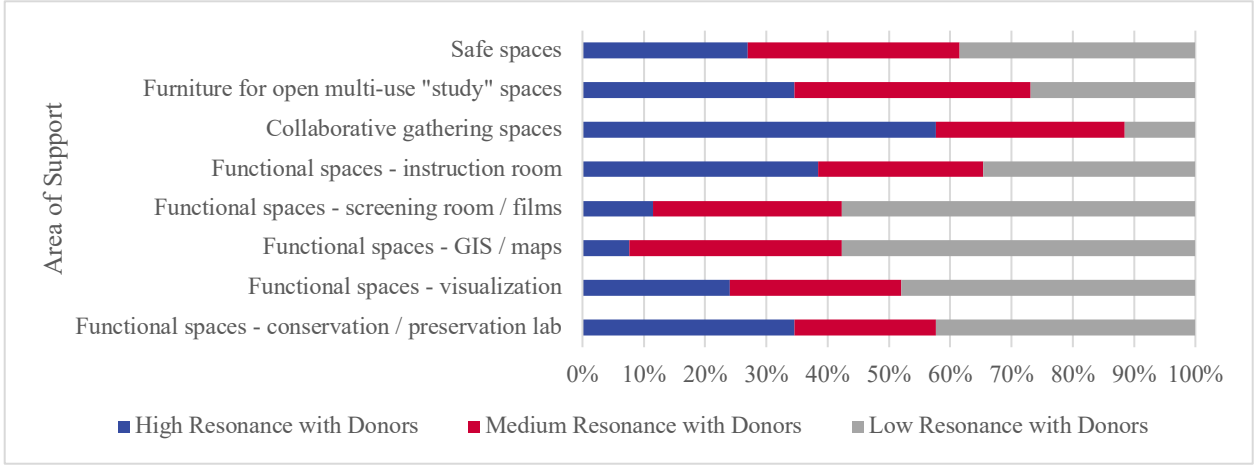
Figure 11. Characteristics of Student and Researcher Experience by Donor Resonance Level



High-resonance initiatives, represented in blue in Figure 11, encompassed providing textbooks for students, offering scholarships to student library workers, and supporting student research and scholarship endeavors, while medium-resonance efforts in white focused on technology enhancements, including computers and peripherals, as well as innovative technologies like AR, VR, and Maker Spaces, along with recognizing the value of archivist expertise. Lastly, low-resonance initiatives marked in red concentrated on funding library employee development and training, as well as leveraging librarian expertise in various domains, such as information literacy instruction, faculty assignment design, the digital scholarship lifecycle, research and data lifecycle, and specific subject areas. In sum, textbooks, scholarships, and technology received the highest resonance points, while internal development and librarian-led initiatives received the lowest donor resonance scores.

Space and Facilities

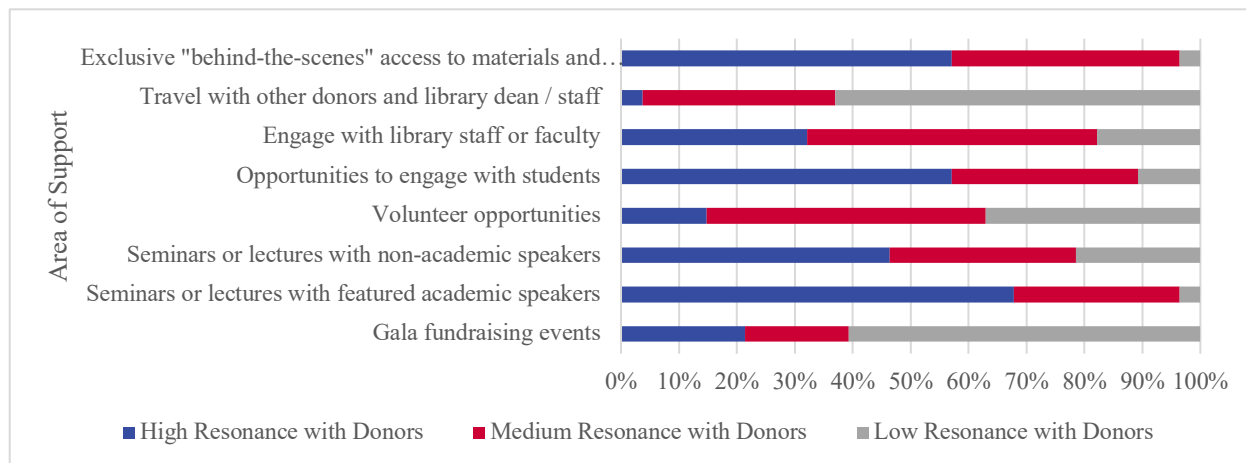
Figure 12. Characteristics of Space and Facilities by Donor Resonance Level



In terms of space and facilities, the highest-ranking initiatives in Figure 12 encompassed the creation of collaborative gathering spaces and functional instructional areas. Acquiring furniture suitable for versatile, open-use spaces fell into the medium priority category. Initiatives related to safe spaces and various functional areas geared towards research and special collections activities received lower resonance scores. In sum, the highest-priority initiatives focused on collaborative gathering spaces and functional instructional areas, while acquiring furniture for open-use spaces was considered a medium priority, and initiatives related to safe spaces and research-specific areas received lower priority.

Community and Donor Events

Figure 13. Characteristics of Community and Donor Events by Donor Resonance Level



The initiatives in Figure 13 that garnered the highest resonance in the community and donor event section included seminars or lectures featuring academic speakers, opportunities for engagement with students, and exclusive "behind-the-scenes" access to materials and individuals. Falling into the medium resonance category were opportunities for volunteering and engagement with library staff or faculty. Initiatives such as gala fundraising events and travel experiences with the library dean or staff received the lowest perceived resonance scores. In summary, the highest resonance scores were achieved by seminars and interactions with students and collections, closely followed by volunteering and engagement with library personnel, while gala events and travel with the dean ranked the lowest in terms of perceived resonance.

Research Question #3

How can we improve upon the value proposition for MSPU Libraries to attract new donors and motivate those donors to give more? What methods and experiences can be adapted from other content and fan industries and applied to donor engagement and fundraising within the library ecosystem?

RQ3 Findings

1. *The keys to brand success gathered from content and fan experience experts are to be authentic to the product and audience, to be clear in focus, adjust and adapt to market changes, and to understand and respect the audience.*
2. *Brands must ensure there is a clear strategy around how to engage with consumers and/or fans that fosters a relationship between brand and fan identity that is cohesive, trusted, and organic.*

Core Themes

As part of our process, we recognized the extraordinary value in incorporating the experts' own commentary and language, complete with their emotional biases and judgments into our analysis, as this has allowed us to further scaffold our findings and recommendations, as well as reinforced our anticipated understanding of the relationship between real world experience and conceptual framework. The code analysis and related brand examples from the expert interviews are shared below.

Code Analysis

Clear themes emerge from all four interviews. As shown in Table 15, the frequency of the top five codes based on interview analysis were perception (236), brand (186), strategy (175), identity (164), and marketing (156).

Table 15. Frequency of Code Appearance

<i>Code</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Perception	236
Brand	186
Strategy	175
Identity	164
Marketing	156
Authenticity	136
Audience	122
Story	120
Influence	84
Fans	81
Emotion	74
Integrity	52
Culture	42

Code Pairing Analysis

Figure 4 shows the results of a code pairing analysis, offering insight into how the codes interact and visibility on the most frequent combinations.

Figure 14: Code Co-Occurrence Matrix

Codes	Codes													
	Audience	Authenticity	Brand	Culture	Emotion	Fans	Identity	Influence	Integrity	Marketing	Perception	Story	Strategy	Totals
Audience		8	16	2	5	11	12	12	1	11	21	9	14	122
Authenticity	8		19	4	8	10	19	6	6	10	25	7	14	136
Brand	16	19		6	7	9	24	11	5	20	34	12	23	186
Culture	2	4	6		3	1	5	2	1	5	4	2	7	42
Emotion	5	8	7	3		4	8	5	1	4	13	6	10	74
Fans	11	10	9	1	4		10	6	3	4	14	4	5	81
Identity	12	19	24	5	8	10		11	6	11	29	13	16	164
Influence	12	6	11	2	5	6	11		2	5	13	4	7	84
Integrity	1	6	5	1	1	3	6	2		8	7	6	6	52
Marketing	11	10	20	5	4	4	11	5	8		27	20	31	156
Perception	21	25	34	4	13	14	29	13	7	27		22	27	236
Story	9	7	12	2	6	4	13	4	6	20	22		15	120
Strategy	14	14	23	7	10	5	16	7	6	31	27	15		175
Totals	122	136	186	42	74	81	164	84	52	156	236	120	175	

To zoom in on data patterns displayed Figure 4 (campus equity continuum), Table 16 shows the most highly correlated code pairings and the frequency of appearance. The top three pairing combinations were perception x brand (34), marketing x strategy (31), and perception x identity (29).

Table 16. Code Pair Frequency

<i>Code Pair</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Perception x Brand	34
Marketing x Strategy	31
Perception x Identity	29
Perception x Marketing	27
Perception x Strategy	27
Perception x Authenticity	25
Brand x Identity	24
Brand x Strategy	23
Perception x Story	22

Thematic codes viewed line-by-line in Table 17 reveal, as expected, perception pairs most frequently with each code, emphasizing the overall influence of how a brand is perceived to its success.

Table 17. Code Pair Frequency by Code Name

<i>Code Pair by Code Name</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Audience x Perception	21
Authenticity x Perception	25
Brand x Perception	34
Culture x Strategy	7
Emotion x Perception	13
Fans x Perception	14
Identity x Perception	29
Influence x Perception	13
Integrity x Marketing	8
Marketing x Strategy	31
Perception x Brand	34
Story x Perception	22
Strategy x Marketing	31

Finding 3.1

Key themes from content and fan experience experts for brand success are to be authentic to the product and audience, to be clear in focus, to adjust and adapt to market changes, and to understand and respect the audience.

These industry leaders provided us insight into their professional process, which allowed us to identify key thematic codes of perception, strategy, identity, marketing, and authenticity that tied back to the literature around group behavior, and the brand knowledge components of image and awareness. This is important because social identity theory and brand equity shows how an individual identifies, perceives, and categorizes themselves in relation to a brand and within their own specific peer group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Association further influences their esteem and sense of self and can mean the difference between in-group engagement and out-group non-engagement. That is to say, the combination of individual action and loyalty to a brand can impact the success or failure of a brand's goals or the brand overall.

Perception of a brand, the intentional nature of the strategy, and the importance of maintaining identity with the brand through marketing all weighed heavily in the interviews. Participants repeatedly addressed the need for brands to always be authentic, to be clear in their focus, to adjust

and adapt their messaging as needed, and to understand their audiences, which will frequently shift and evolve due to market changes and technology advances, among other internal and external factors.

Participants provided specific examples around “brand” and “audience” relationships that helped with our understanding of how brands seek to connect with their audiences and vice versa; these included:

Metallica: “...they have grown with their audience...they don't make the same records all the time. They make their fans feel like they're important.”

Dave Grohl: “...people will probably say that guy's overexposed and that's more industry people saying that by the way, that he does too much and is overexposed but I think when you look at what he does you get a genuine sense of enthusiasm with everything he does, and it feels real...He's someone who truly enjoys what he's doing. And it comes across that way...I guarantee fans think they're his friend, like literally his friend. And I think that's the ultimate compliment.”

When the interviews turned towards the critical need for brands to maintain their authenticity, these leaders inherently understood the importance of social identity and brand equity – without using that specific academic language – and their belief that the relationship between brand, audience, perception, and identity is essential to a brand’s ability to evolve and change authentically with its audience. Examples that highlight how some brands do this well, while others do not, include:

Subway: “...if I see Steph Curry talking Subway that doesn't make me want to go to Subway. You know, because I feel like he got a big check, and he doesn't eat Subway.”

Mercedes: “I saw some Alicia Keys commercial where she was driving [a Mercedes] ...made it seem like she drove that car. By the way, she very well...could have been written a big check...it's kind of subjective but when it feels authentic...but [this] feels real and not bought.”

Lewis Hamilton: “...he's plant based. He cares what he puts into his body. It would be easy for me to go get a deal with McDonald's or Chipotle...but he's also vegan... So, no one would actually believe you that [he endorses] it.... Nobody's going to sit there and say that Lewis Hamilton likes McDonald's.”

As we examined the comments and examples used by our subject matter experts in their own words, e.g., how they expressed their thoughts and perceptions, we were able to tie this back to the literature and how Keller (1993) frames the components of brand image and shifting favorability. Using examples from the interviews around Tesla’s leadership and Beats’ inability to evolve and

how these, arguable missteps, potentially affect these brands' current perception, it is apparent that even brand experts who understand professionally how brand alignment works, cannot completely remove themselves from personally associating a brand with their identity and then communicating that to others:

Tesla: "...first seemed to be...progressive, potentially inclusive proposition...presenting something that's good for the environment...something that you know that the public interests are moving toward and as good for the earth...all the things that you would want to see from a company that seems to be doing some disruptive stuff. Musk...kind of turns me off to Tesla in a way that...I otherwise probably wouldn't...if Tim Cook for example, were running Tesla."

Beats: "it stood as kind of like the pop culture version of how you listen to music...then it was an Apple product and suddenly it just lost its voice and lost branding. It just became another product in the lineup with multiple products. But they never renovated the brand. The brand never evolved or did anything further and it just suddenly fell..."

In addition to the value of the examples themselves, this is especially important learning for us because it demonstrates that brand perception does not start and stop with those who identify as "fans" of a brand. Negative or positive association with a brand exists in what might be described as concentric circles of fans where core fans are in the center, and those who simply know a brand are at the outer edges. They are not as influential as core fans, but they do contribute to the narrative inside communities around brands. And this finding matters in our analysis because when we look at Underwood's (2001) graph and the flow of social identification and brand equity and then overlay that with Keller's (1993) idea around consumer memory and brand image, it is clear that we cannot limit recommendations to our partner organization around only targeting a perceived or expected fanbase as there are others in a brand's overall audience who can, even subtly, influence a brand's growth and sustainability.

Finding 3.2

Brands must ensure there is a clear strategy around how to engage with consumers and/or fans that fosters a relationship between brand and fan identity that is cohesive, trusted, and organic.

The qualitative data clearly shows there are right and wrong ways to approach how a brand presents itself to its audience based on its goals. The fundamentals of connecting brand and fan identity – including the need to change or evolve – tie into marketing, messaging, audience, strategy, story, and a real commitment to brand evolution and leadership.

For example, these quotes from our interviews about Tom Brady and Nike are impactful and relatable to almost anyone when seeking to understand effective consumer engagement strategies that feel trusted and organic to the consumer:

Tom Brady: *“Tom had to eventually find his own brand because just being a winning quarterback of the Patriots wasn't enough. Now he's kind of like this fun loving, jokey dad and which is totally opposite of what we saw on the football field. But that's...[his] brand right now.”*

Nike: *“Nike might be one of the closest brands I can say that is for everybody because you have a body or you're an athlete and it tries to appeal to everyone from the elementary school kid to the senior citizen.”*

As we examined and parsed the qualitative data, we began to consider that, especially when looking at the current perception of MSPU libraries, and libraries in general as revealed in our quantitative data, that MSPU libraries need to reposition themselves as a brand, and to approach this as a brand-building strategy. At the risk of overemphasizing this point for effect, if MSPU libraries could be like Nike and authentically find a way to appeal to “everyone” in some way, or see that, like Tom Brady, they need to change how they are viewed because the world has evolved around them – or at least aspire to that kind of vision – even the slightest shifts we believe would be meaningful for the libraries and MSPU overall.

Note that although the brand examples as selected from our participants are based on their own professional experience and personal biases, these are extremely useful for us to understand as part of our evaluative process because these are relatable examples for anyone with whom we engage about recommendations, as well as how we communicate actionable next steps. For example, not simply for our own edification, but when we present our data, findings, strategy, and recommendations to MSPU leadership, being able to use brands they already understand sets an important baseline for how to compare what MSPU libraries are doing correctly or otherwise, and to then set aspirational goals around a focused strategy that effectively and creatively connects MSPU libraries with their audience or, ideally, their “fans.”

VII. Recommendations

An academic library is a brand.

Institutional leadership, alongside both the internal and external communities linked with these institutions, might not explicitly employ the term "brand" when discussing the library. However, it undeniably functions as such. When viewed strictly from a purpose-driven standpoint, the library's brand constitutes an integral component of the broader learning environment. Here, students can discover a serene space for focused study or gather to explore the resources that support and enrich their educational pursuits. Additionally, the library offers a venue for highlighting unique and valuable collections, thereby broadening the horizons for the community and donors to engage in learning. The overarching identity of the library today is rooted in a practical necessity that sits alongside additional dimensions that promote collaborative learning and exploration within scholarship and research communities.

Contrast this brand identity with that of an institution's sports teams or professional schools, where the brand identity is both practical and emotional and inherently builds fan communities, e.g., college football fans, alumni of the business school, and a clear gap emerges between libraries and these other areas within an institution. This gap is not only based on perception, meaning how people view the library versus the football team, but it is reality-based as well as evidenced by the donations received by a team or professional school versus the library. This disparity is not added information, but it is with a newfound awareness and deeper exploration of this gap that provides the opportunities for libraries to change or enhance their brand image, build a real fan base, and connect with donors differently to then generate new revenue to support long-term library growth and engagement.

The quantitative and qualitative data we gathered was illuminating both in reinforcing what we already expected around the current national perception of libraries – specifically from the librarian survey – and what we had not necessarily expected from the interviews we conducted with sports and entertainment executives outside the library community.

The survey provided us with an expanded understanding of roles, responsibilities, and opportunities from librarians within their own institutions and institutional leadership, which aligned with our own experiences inside MSPU. In other words, what we expected to be true was

true across most of the respondents to the survey. They were clear in how their institution viewed the library and how they supported library initiatives and donor engagement, as well as existing limitations within this traditional view of the library, but with a hopefulness around how to change the relationship between academic libraries, the institution, and their communities.

The interviews provided understandably different insight given our focus was on gathering data around how brands connect with fans and what challenges exist within a non-academic environment when brands are looking to grow engagement and/or revenue within their specific target markets. Whether the discussion was on an athlete, band, or consumer brand – all classified as “brands” for the purpose of this study – our interviewees provided professional perspective and educated opinions on what works and what does not for brands as these brands pursue change, growth, and expansion.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Develop an overarching “Library+” strategy for MSPU.

- a. Leverage historical internal and comparison group data, survey insights, and interview findings to shift the library’s current market position relative to MSPU and to other academic libraries.
- b. Reimagine the library as a “start-up business” with identifiable “products” to modernize the perception of its value and offerings for multigenerational “fan” groups.
- c. Define the identity and potential interests of overlapping target markets.

1. Professionally rebrand MSPU library.

- a. Apply the learnings from outside the academic community to approach rebranding the library including imaging, messaging, and marketing.
- b. Reframe the library as an independent consumer-facing brand and not only as an academic library that is part of an overall institution.
- c. Partner with MSPU business school faculty and students on this initiative – leverage the vast experience inside the university to create a real-world Library+ project for MBA students to lead and manage.

2. Expand collaboration and the training for library development leaders.

- a. Collaborate with development leaders to create innovative approaches, product marketing materials and offerings, donor targeting opportunities and strategies, and clarify donor definitions.
- b. Craft a comprehensive training program that leverages the gathered data, brand identification, and objectives to provide current and future development officers diverse opportunities to generate new revenue for the library.

- c. Test the new branding, messaging, marketing, product offerings, and donor-engagement strategies, and refine training as needed to facilitate revenue and brand awareness growth.

Recommendation 1. Develop an overarching “Library+” strategy for MSPU.

MSPU libraries need to think of themselves as a start-up business that is providing a product to the market. We recognize that “start-up” and “product” may seem like odd words to use for an institution that has been around since 1911, but the library is a part of the overall MSPU product ecosystem, and products need innovation to grow and change. Our own field and academic research have clearly outlined and explained the critical relationship between innovation, brand, product, audience, and successful outcomes, so we are comfortable with this strategic concept and related language.

What we also gleaned from our research is that the ability to innovate comes from thinking differently or even radically, and for leadership to be able to adjust quickly to market changes, hence the reason we are recommending that MSPU reimagine the library as a product that thinks, and acts, like an entrepreneurial start-up organization. Therefore, the overarching concept is that this is “MSPU Library+,” and we will recommend that internal leadership applies a lean start-up product approach using appropriate and proven methodologies, testing, and measurements. The idea of the library as a product with a market, audience, brand, messaging, goals, and measurements, is simple to explain across MSPU’s leadership and the MSPU community, and we believe it will change the dynamic and increase excitement and engagement around the library.

Recommendation 2. Professionally rebrand MSPU library

The MSPU library needs to be rebranded. The rebranding process means examining the library as a brand from an “outside-in” perspective regarding its imaging, messaging, marketing, internal and external perceptions, its current value to the community, and creating a holistic plan for change and representation to its target market(s). The strategy would be modeled after what a consumer brand would do if they wanted to reinvent themselves, expand into other markets, and plan for new products to be released into the market as part of an overall rebranding initiative.

When looking at the operationalization of these recommendations, we acutely recognize that difference between MSPU libraries and a consumer brand or star athlete is that the latter have agencies, PR, media consultants, and other highly paid professionals around them to do this work at

the highest level. This difference is certainly clear from the interviews we conducted and the examples our participants used in their explanation of what defines a successful versus unsuccessful brand. MSPU does not have those types of outside resources and/or, more accurately, may not allocate the resources to hire those resources now.

What MSPU does have, however, is a top-ranked business school, which can provide the resources, expertise, and talent to assist the library in this exact initiative. Our first step would be to meet with the Dean of the business school and collaboratively craft a real MBA student project in partnership with the MSPU libraries to rebrand the library and create a sales and marketing plan that coincides and supports the rebranding. This strategy serves multiple purposes:

1. Provides professional faculty and student resources for this initiative to library leadership.
2. Creates a real-world, multi-faceted project opportunity for MBA students to learn and create actionable change for a business.
3. Engages the library with other MSPU departments in meaningful ways that have not been explored previously, which drives commitment and interest: the university is helping the university.
4. There will be buy in from MSPU leadership because points (1), (2), and (3) serve the university as whole, and at minimal cost.
5. This model can be replicated across MSPU for other opportunities and become a case study for other academic institutions, thereby reinforcing MSPU's leadership position in this area.

Recommendation 3. Expand collaboration and training for development officers.

With any new and meaningful initiative inside an organization, there is training and learning that must happen inside the organization to ensure alignment between goals, objectives, and those who are tasked with leading and executing the strategy. On the frontline of successful application of the Library+ strategy is the MSPU library fundraisers who foster the relationships between MSPU and donors. So, part of this integrated process, and operating in parallel with the development of this new MSPU product, is that fundraisers will need expanded sales and marketing training.

The reality is that as the MSPU library evolves, how it is messaged and presented to potential donors – and ideally an expanded donor base – will change. The MSPU library development team is smart and passionate but needs to be more connected with the current data around average donor contribution, historical revenue growth, and donor allocation areas so they can develop new, and innovative, outreach that will drive revenue. These team members are salespeople, for lack of a

better word, so the more data salespeople have around what is new that they can sell, the better they will do, and the more avenues they will naturally explore or consider for revenue.

Therefore, once the branding and messaging is clearly defined for MSPU Library+, training will need to happen around how to sell this new library brand. This will require strategy, collaboration across all areas of the Library+ initiative, and new sales materials. Based on our interaction with the current fundraising team, we believe that there will be meaningful excitement from this team around the Library+ process, which will make a significant difference both financially and culturally.

VIII. Limitations and Future Research

Limitations

Donor Restriction

The best way to understand donor group identity and interaction with a brand, such as the library, would be to talk with donors. However, the partner organization requested that we not contact donors for input. Therefore, we approached the question of library fundraising through investigating past performance and by asking library development professionals and leaders how they perceived donor engagement. The major drawback with this approach is we asked people who already find it difficult to attract donors within the campus ecosystem about their experience with identified donors. However, the respondents were particularly helpful in establishing the brand equity of libraries within the campus and identifying the more popular characteristics of libraries that resonate with donors.

Future research would benefit from small focus groups of people who are inclined to support the institution but are not current library donors. Asking individuals why they choose to donate to the areas they support in terms of characteristics, marketing, and peer group behavior would help future library leaders refine library offerings and communication to attract more interest.

Data Scope

The narrow scope of the internal data set limited analysis to a subset of campus libraries. Three other campus libraries benefit from donor engagement. A full look at library donations across campus may have changed the emphasis on small donations or gift-in-kind reliance for large sums of recorded gifts. The libraries underwent an organizational change in 2018; however, historic data has not been aligned and is potentially unreliable because of methodological differences.

CASE data reflects large-scale categories of donor activity. Library related fundraising data is limited to current operations and endowment gift types, which are both small for the partner library. Capital and personnel funding is pooled with other academic areas and is not available for libraries. Unfortunately for those interested in library fundraising, CASE discontinued reporting of library contributions with the 2022 survey due to overall low returns compared to other campus areas. This is yet another example of the diminishment of the belief that higher education

institutions can attract sufficient interest in supporting their libraries through fundraising activities.

Survey Questions

The survey applied the dimensions of brand knowledge to a new area of study. Since most literature about library fundraising is limited to experiential rather than conceptual ideas, no extant reliable or valid survey instruments were available. While a limitation for this study, the limitation of the survey speaks to the weakness of library research into donor motivation.

The low response rate and significant representation of public university responses are two additional limitations. MSPU is a private university with a smaller alumni base. Insufficient numbers of completed surveys limited further exploration into understanding the differences between public and private university donor landscapes.

Interviews

The findings from four completed interviews provided thought-provoking perspectives about commercial, sport, and music industry brand management. Additional interviews may have continued to confirm the findings or brought new considerations. Our premise of asking professionals outside academia to share their experience is novel and worth further exploration. However, libraries, as we have seen, exist on the left end of the identification continuum. How knowledge from the far-right end of the continuum assists the far-left end is unclear yet merits close attention and potential future research.

Future Research

Recognizing that our recommendations are specific to the partner library and fundraising operation, we also considered reasonable next steps, or goals, for future investigation. In sum, the four identified limitations suggest four practical goals to pursue. First, conduct small group or individual interviews with donors to gain direct feedback on donor perceptions of identity and library support. Second, work with CASE, or more practically, a library association to develop a library-focused voluntary support survey. Many institutions have the data framework in place from years of participation in the CASE VSE Survey. Third, refine the donor identification and campus-based equity survey to tap into recognizing the recursive and destructive fundraising loop experienced by performing areas. Lastly, add depth to the findings from the content industry by

conducting more interviews with alternative industry experts to refine themes for application in library settings.

IV. Conclusions

Our survey data, collected from librarians across the country, suggests that the most engaged set of current library donors primarily focus on traditional brand elements, including special collections, study spaces, and student success. This focus is sound for two key reasons: first, donors seek personal and social connection with these familiar aspects of an academic library, and second, their engagement will not extend to new "Library+" initiatives unless a meaningful alternative to the traditional library is presented, one that reshapes their perception of the library's role in academia and invites a personal connection.

The established industry perception has long been that libraries have a specific, widely accepted purpose, reinforced over decades by institutions, students, communities, and donors. Drawing from qualitative data from non-industry participants, we identify gaps between the status quo understanding of libraries and the potential Library+ offerings, which we believe can be closed by altering how institutions, students, communities, and donors perceive libraries.

As we considered objective, non-academic industry data on how successful brands change their perception, messaging, and marketing to engage and generate revenue, we gained insights into reframing libraries and approaching them as brands or products. Brands create a targeted strategy to connect with their audiences or fans to engage and generate revenue from their audiences, e.g., convincing people to buy the latest music or a Mercedes or a beer, fundamentally recognizing the need to evolve and connect with their audiences in novel ways. This shift in perspective led to an evolution in our own perception of how to connect "fans" with libraries.

A gap exists between the current and reimagined perception of libraries. Our exploration underscores the importance of a library's identity and how the concentric circles of various audience groups, from donors to students, perceive libraries within broader academic, community, or cultural contexts. This perception differs from how donors view other areas of an institution, leading to disparities in fundraising data. Consider the donor perception and support drawn by athletics, professional schools, and student support activities compared to library campaign goals. A new model must emerge to drive identification and aspirational support of the library's mission within the campus brand.

To address this gap, we propose the need for a new model that drives identification and aspirational support for the library's mission within the overall campus brand. This model incorporates elements like Perception, Strategy, Identity, Marketing, and Authenticity to reshape the partner library engagement efforts both internally and externally. Our findings suggest actionable recommendations for the partner organization that will result in incremental improvements in their impact within academic and donor communities.

In sum, we suggest three broad recommendations for refreshing the MSPU library. One, develop a comprehensive "Library+" strategy that includes evaluating market positioning, adopting a start-up mindset, and repositioning library services as products to attract interest and revenue. Second, professionally rebrand the library with insights from outside the academic community, emphasizing it as an independent consumer-facing brand, and involving MSPU business school faculty and students for real-world projects. Third, expand collaboration with development leaders, creating a training program based on data and objectives, and continually testing and refining branding, marketing, and engagement strategies to drive revenue and brand awareness growth.

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Appendix A. Instruments

Survey Instrument

SECTION ONE: Library Brand Awareness in Campus Fundraising Ecosystem

This section seeks to understand awareness of library fundraising priorities among a broad base of potential donors. It asks if the library is well-positioned at the campus level to succeed in attracting potential donors.

[Q1] Please select your level of agreement with the statements about library brand awareness.

Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

- The library is well represented in university-level fundraising materials (e.g., website, campaign materials, donor magazine, social media, etc.). (1)
- Library priorities are well-known to a broad base of donors. (2)
- Library priorities are highlighted by the university during campaigns. (3)
- University-level advancement teams are knowledgeable of library priorities. (4)
- University-level advancement teams promote library priorities in communication with potential donors. (5)
- The library has well-defined priorities that reflect university fundraising goals. (6)
- The library has communicated well-defined priorities to university-level advancement teams. (7)
- The university advancement team is responsive to library development support needs. (8)

[Q2] Estimated donor awareness of your current library priorities by generation (move bars into ranked list).

- ___ Silent Generation (born 1925-1945) (1)
- ___ Baby Boomer Generation (born 1946-1964) (2)
- ___ Generation X (born 1965-1979) (3)
- ___ Millennials (born 1980-1994) (4)
- ___ Generation Z (born 1995-2012) (5)

[Q3] Estimated awareness of your current library priorities by donor type (move bars into ranked list).

- ___ Alumni (1)
- ___ Non-alumni who interact with the university (2)
- ___ Parents of current or former students (3)
- ___ Foundations (small family or large organizations) (4)
- ___ Local community (5)
- ___ Other (6)

[Q4] Are there any observations or anecdotes you wish to share about aspects of library awareness on your campus?

SECTION TWO: Brand Image of Library in Campus Development Ecosystem

This section seeks to understand the favorability, strength, and uniqueness of the library image to a broad donor base. It asks if the library is competitive for donors who seek to make an impact with their contribution.

[page break]

[Q5] Please select your level of agreement with the statements about favorability of your library brand image.

Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

- The library is viewed favorably by donors when deciding where to contribute on campus. (1)
- The library provides evidence of value for donors compared to other campus options. (2)
- The library is viewed as a good long-term investment for donors compared to other campus options. (3)
- The library has a competitive edge over other areas in attracting donors. (4)
- The library is viewed favorably across all generations of donors (5)

[Q6] Please select your level of agreement with the statements about strength of association of your library brand image.

**** "Campus donor" refers to donors who are familiar with your campus through updates from campus development or other partners.***

Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

Campus donors strongly associate the library as a strong symbol of the intellectual life of the university. (1)

- Campus donors strongly associate the library as a provider of quality information. (2)
- Campus donors strongly associate the library with fostering student academic success. (3)
- Campus donors strongly associate the library with fostering student belonging. (4)
- Campus donors strongly associate the library with fostering faculty success in teaching, research, and scholarship. (5)
- Campus donors strongly associate the library with caring for special collections of interest to the community. (6)

[Q7] Please select your level of agreement with the statements about uniqueness of association of your library brand image.

*** "Campus donor" refers to donors who are familiar with your campus through updates from campus development or other partners.**

Likert Scale: Strongly Disagree (1) Somewhat disagree (2) Neither agree nor disagree (3) Somewhat agree (4) Strongly agree (5)

- The library offers donors a unique opportunity to invest in the richness of campus life compared to other campus funding opportunities. (1)
- The library offers donors unique opportunities to support student success compared to other campus funding opportunities. (2)
- The library offers donors unique opportunities to support faculty success in teaching and research compared to other campus funding opportunities. (3)
- Campus donors would identify with the unique opportunities to support campus life through library services and collections if promoted. (4)
- Campus donors would identify with the unique opportunities to support student success through library services and collections if promoted. (5)
- Campus donors would identify with the unique opportunities to support faculty success through library services and collections if promoted. (6)

[Q8] Estimated donor favorability toward your library by generation (move bars into ranked list).

- _____ Silent Generation (born 1925-1945) (1)
- _____ Baby Boomer Generation (born 1946-1964) (2)
- _____ Generation X (born 1965-1979) (3)
- _____ Millennials (born 1980-1994) (4)
- _____ Generation Z (born 1995-2012) (5)

[Q9] Estimated favorability toward your library by donor type (move bars into ranked list).

- _____ Alumni (1)
- _____ Non-alumni who interact with the university (2)
- _____ Parents of current or former students (3)
- _____ Foundations (small family or large organizations) (4)
- _____ Local community (5)
- _____ Other (6)

[Q10] Observations or anecdotes you wish to share about aspects of favorability of donors toward your library.

SECTION THREE: Library Characteristics

Personal identification with a topic, team, or activity is often expressed through membership in a fan community. What characteristics are essential to a library fan community?

In this section we ask you to consider library characteristics that resonate with existing donors and characteristics that will attract new donors if amplified to campus-level fundraising outlets. This section asks, what do library fans value?

[Q11] Collections: Based on your experience, which characteristics resonate the most with donors? Move the characteristics on the left to the corresponding box on the right.

High Resonance with Donors

Medium Resonance with Donors

Low to No Resonance with Donors

- Provision of books and other materials for general use (1)
- General collection support - designated for subject area of interest (2)
- General collection support - designated for subject area of need (3)
- Provision and stewardship of rare or unique collections for research (4)
- Provision and stewardship of rare or unique collections of interest to the donor (5)
- Provision and stewardship of rare or unique collections specific to the local community or geographic region (6)
- Provision and stewardship of rare or unique collections specific to the local community
- Provision and stewardship of official campus archives (7)
- Digitization of rare or unique collections (8)
- Support for faculty open access or open educational resource publishing (9)
- Other 1 (10)
- Other 2 (11)
- Other 3 (12)

[Q12] Student & Researcher Experience: Based on your experience, which characteristics resonate the most with donors? Move the characteristics on the left to the corresponding box on the right.

High Resonance with Donors

Medium Resonance with Donors

Low to No Resonance with Donors

- Provision of textbooks for students (1)
- Provision of technology (computers, peripherals, calculators) (2)
- Provision of exploratory technology (AR, VR, recording studio, maker space materials) (3)
- Scholarships or grants for students employed by the library (4)
- Scholarships or grants for student research or scholarship (5)
- Scholarships or grants for library employee training and development (6)
- Librarian information literacy instruction for students (7)
- Librarian expertise in faculty assignment design (8)

- Librarian expertise in digital scholarship lifecycle (9)
- Librarian expertise in research and data lifecycle (10)
- Librarian research expertise in a specific subject area (11)
- Archivist expertise in specific collection or subject area (12)
- Other 1 (13)
- Other 2 (14)
- Other 3 (15)

[Q13] Space and Facilities: Based on your experience, which characteristics resonate the most with donors? Move the characteristics on the left to the corresponding box on the right.

High Resonance with Donors

Medium Resonance with Donors

Low to No Resonance with Donors

- Provision of functional spaces - conservation / preservation lab (1)
- Provision of functional spaces - visualization (2)
- Provision of functional spaces - GIS / maps (3)
- Provision of functional spaces - screening room / films (4)
- Provision of functional spaces - instruction room (5)
- Provision of collaborative gathering spaces (6)
- Provision of furniture for open multi-use "study" spaces (7)
- Provision of safe spaces (8)
- Provision of spaces that encourage student belonging (9)
- Provision of exhibition spaces (10)
- Other 1 (11)
- Other 2 (12)
- Other 3 (13)

[Q14] Community and Donor Events: Based on your experience, which characteristics resonate the most with donors? Move the characteristics on the left to the corresponding box on the right.

High Resonance with Donors

Medium Resonance with Donors

Low to No Resonance with Donors

- Gala fundraising events (1)
- Seminars or lectures with featured academic speakers (2)
- Seminars or lectures with non-academic speakers (3)
- Volunteer opportunities (4)
- Opportunities to engage with students (5)
- Opportunities to engage with library staff or faculty (6)
- Opportunities to travel with other donors and library dean / staff (7)
- Opportunities for exclusive "behind-the-scenes" access to materials and people (8)
- Other 1 (9)
- Other 2 (10)
- Other 3 (11)

[Q15] What is your role with the library?

Dean / University Librarian / Vice Provost for Libraries (1)
 Library Development Officer (2)
 Library Friends Director (3)
 Development or Friends Assistant (4)
 Other (5) _____

[Q16] Is your institution of higher education public or private?

Public (1)
 Private (2)

[Q17] What was the enrollment at your university in spring 2022.

Undergraduate (1) _____
 Graduate (2) _____

[Q18] Number of campus libraries (in and out of main library system)

1 (1)
 2-4 (2)
 5-7 (3)
 8-10 (4)
 10+ (5)

[Q19] What is the total size of the library staff in FTEs?

[Q20] Does the library currently have an ongoing and established fundraising program?

Yes (1)
 No (2)
 Stagnant (3)

Display This Question:

If does the library currently have an ongoing and established fundraising program? = Yes

[Q21] What is the stated purpose of the library fundraising program? (Select all that apply)

General purpose (1)
 Building construction or renovation (2)
 Funds for library materials only (3)
 Funds for additional library staff only (4)
 Funds for library equipment and furniture only (5)
 Other (6) _____

[Q22] Do campus libraries coordinate fundraising efforts?

Yes (1)
 No (2)
 Hybrid (3)
 Other (4) _____

[Q23] How many library or fundraising professionals (FTEs) are paid to work on fundraising for your library? Include persons housed either in the library or elsewhere.

FTEs from library budget (1) _____
 FTEs from university or foundation budget (2) _____

[Q24] What is the organizational structure of fundraising for the library?

Centralized (1)
 Decentralized (2)
 Shared (3)
 Other (4) _____

[Q25] Has the university designated a person for library fundraising?

Yes (1)
 No (2)
 Yes, shared with other campus groups (3)

[Q26] Using approximate percentages, what is the breakdown of the distribution of philanthropic income across the following areas within your library?

General support: _____ (1)
 Archives and special collections: _____ (2)
 Resources and technology: _____ (3)
 Student support: _____ (4)
 Faculty support: _____ (5)
 Facilities: _____ (6)
 Total: _____

[Q27] What is the biggest expense / allocation in your fundraising budget?

[Q28] How actively does the president, provost, or chancellor of the university support library fundraising efforts?

Not active at all (1)
 Somewhat active (2)
 Neither active nor inactive (3)
 Somewhat active (4)
 Very active (5)

[Q29] How actively does the vice president of university advancement (or similar title) support library fundraising efforts?

- Not active at all (1)
- Somewhat active (2)
- Neither active nor inactive (3)
- Somewhat active (4)
- Very active (5)

[Q30] Does the library have an advisory council?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

If does the library have an advisory council? = Yes

[Q31] What activities does the advisory council engage in?

- Promote library goals (1)
- Raise money (2)
- Volunteer (3)
- Advise the library dean/UL/director (4)

Display This Question:

If does the library have an advisory council? = Yes

[Q32] Do you require a minimum annual donation for membership on the advisory council?

- No (1)
 - Yes (please provide minimum amount per year or term) (2)
-

[Q33] Does your library have a "Friends" group?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

[Q34] What activities does the "Friends" group engage in?

- Promote library goals (1)
- Raise money (2)
- Volunteer (3)
- Advise the library dean/UL/director (4)

[Q35] How important are the following sources in providing funds to support the library?

- ___ Alumni (1)
- ___ Non-alumni friends (2)

- _____ Faculty and staff (3)
- _____ Parents (4)
- _____ Business and industry (5)
- _____ Private foundations (6)
- _____ Clubs and organizations (7)
- _____ Other (8)

Interview Subjects and Questions

As part of our data gathering and analysis process, we are conducting four, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with participants who come from industries other than academia – specifically music and sports – where their deep understanding of fan behavior and facilitating increased fan spend over time are critical for their organization’s success. We have been able to recruit these participants via industry networking and professional relationships and we believe that these types of interviews provide us unique perspective, insightful evaluative data, and additional models to help us understand donor behavior beyond the existing literature and survey process.

Five foundational questions were asked of each participant. Additional experience-specific lines of inquiry and data gathering were followed during the 60–90-minute interview process.

Interview Questions

Foundational Questions

1. When you think about a brand, how do you determine the strength of a brand in relation to its fans (consumers, buyers, clients, etc.)?
2. What are the most critical areas a brand needs to develop to connect with its fans (we will use ‘fans’ as the catch-all)?
 - a. How do brands effectively build their awareness and image?
 - b. What are the pitfalls brands need to avoid in this process?
3. What are some examples of brands you feel have done this consistently well over time?
4. What about brands that started out strong and failed?
 - c. Why did they fail?
5. If a brand is looking to change its image and connectivity with its fans, and increase the brand-identity relationship what are the key things it needs to do?

Interviewee-Specific Questions

We developed targeted questions for each participant based on their current role within the sports and entertainment industry so we could gather targeted data around their experience and perspective after using the foundational questions as interview benchmarks. ☐

Appendix B. IRB Approval

Human Research Protections Program – HRPP
Supporting the work of the IRB and Providing HRPP Oversight



RE: IRB #231051 "Library Fundraising in a University Setting"

Dear Holly Jeffcoat:

A designee of the Institutional Review Board reviewed the research study identified above. The designee determined the project does not qualify as "research" per 45 CFR §46.102(l).

(l) Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy, whether or not they are conducted or supported under a program which is considered research for other purposes.

This capstone project is exploring the relationship between institutional libraries and donor commitment to evaluate new and diverse fundraising models for Southern Methodist University (SMU) based in Dallas, Texas.

As this does not meet the "criteria for research" as described in 45 CFR §46.102(l), IRB approval is not required.

Please note: Any changes to this proposal that may alter its "non-research" status should be presented to the IRB for approval prior to implementation of the changes. In accordance with IRB Policy III.J, amendments will be accepted up to one year from the date of approval. If such changes are requested beyond this time frame, submission of a new proposal is required.

Sincerely,

Amy Thomas BA, MS, EdS, CIM
Institutional Review Board
Integrated Sciences Committee

Electronic Signature: Amy Thomas/VUMC/Vanderbilt : (6194f58d0a8a79ab0ab1b93740da0b32)

Signed On: 06/27/2023 11:09:27 AM CDT

Appendix C. Survey Respondent Information

Institutional Demographics

Survey respondents overwhelmingly held the role of development officer (60%) and library senior leader (33%) (Table C.1). More public (80%) than private (20%) institutions are represented (Table C.2). Respondents are equally distributed by region with the most from Texas (17%) and the least from the Pacific Northwest (7%) (Table C.3). Nearly all respondents representing private institutions are in the Northeast (67%) with one (17%) each in Texas and the Southeast. Undergraduate enrollment distributions of respondent institutions are heavily concentrated in the 20,000-30,000 range for publics and in the under 20,000 range for privates (Table C.4). Graduate enrollment is concentrated in the 5,001-10,000 range for both public and private institution respondents (Table C.5).

Table C.1. Primary Role of Respondent

<i>Role</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>
Dean / University Librarian / Vice Provost for Libraries	33.33	10
Library Development Officer	60.0	18
Library Friends Director	0.00	0
Development or Friends Assistant	0.00	0
Other	6.67	2
Total	100%	30

Table C.2. Role and Institution Type

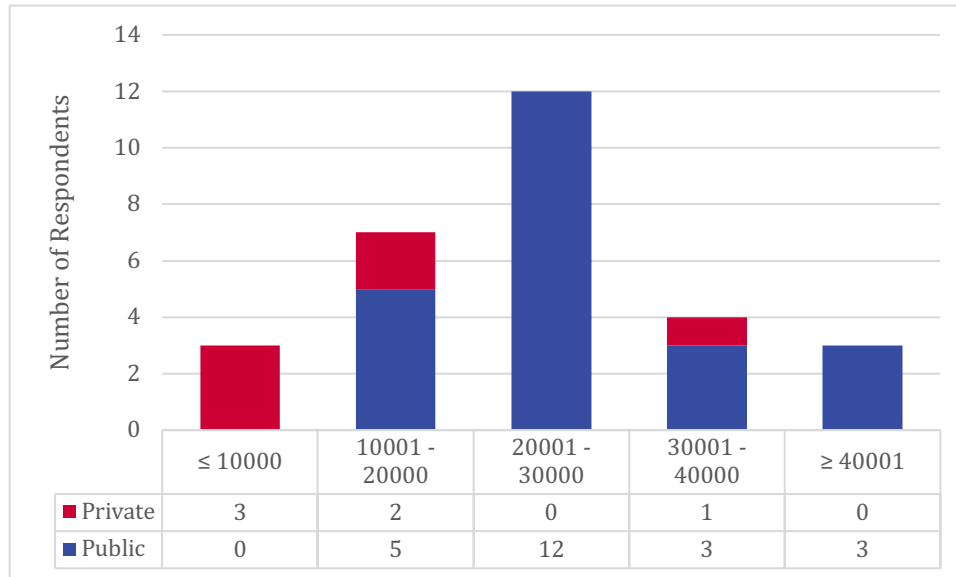
<i>Role by Institution Type</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Total</i>
Dean / University Librarian / Vice Provost for Libraries	7	3	10
Library Development Officer	16	2	18
Library Friends Director	0	0	0
Development or Friends Assistant	0	0	0
Other	1	1	2
Total	24	6	30

Table C.3. Region by Institution Type

<i>Region</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>
California	3	0
Intermountain West	4	0
Mid-Atlantic	4	0
Midwest	4	0
Northeast	0	4
Pacific Northwest	2	0
Southeast	3	1
Southwest (includes Texas)	4	1
Total	24	6

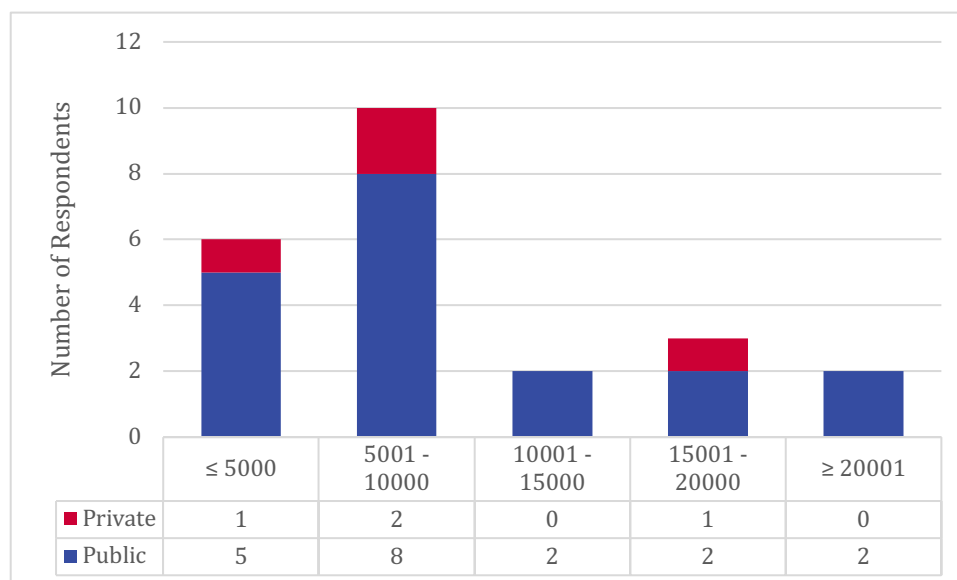
Table C.4. Undergraduate Enrollment by Institution Type

<i>Undergraduate Enrollment</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>
≤ 10000	0	3
10001 - 20000	5	2
20001 - 30000	12	0
30001 - 40000	3	1
≥ 40001	3	0
Total	23	6

Figure C.1. Undergraduate Enrollment by Institution Type**Table C.5. Graduate Enrollment by Institution Type**

<i>Graduate Enrollment</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>
≤ 5000	5	1
5001 - 10000	8	2
10001 - 15000	2	0
15001 - 20000	2	1
≥ 20001	2	0
Total	19	4

Figure C.2. Graduate Enrollment by Institution Type



Institutional Fundraising Structure

The existence of a friend's group (n=12, 41%) is more prevalent among the private (83%) than the public (30%) reporting institutions (Figure C.3). The friends group members promote library goals (37%), raise funds (37%), and volunteer (22%) more than advising the library leader (4%) (Figure C.5). More libraries have an advisory group (n=16, 55%), which places a heavier emphasis on advising the library leader (30%), promoting library goals (30%), and raising funds (22%) (Figure C.5).

Figure C.3. Percent with Friends Group by Institution Type

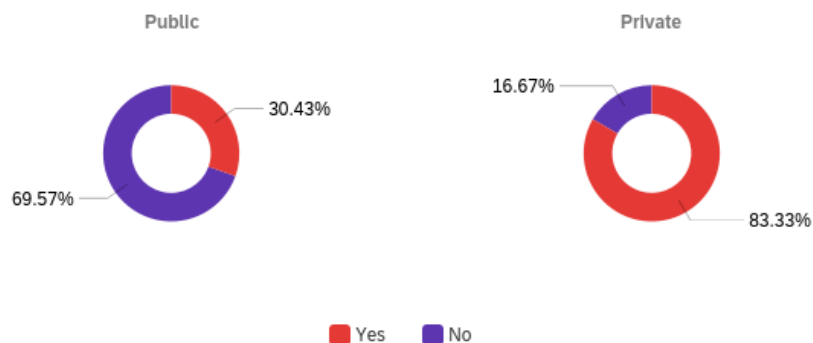


Figure C.4. Percentage with Advisory Board by Institution Type

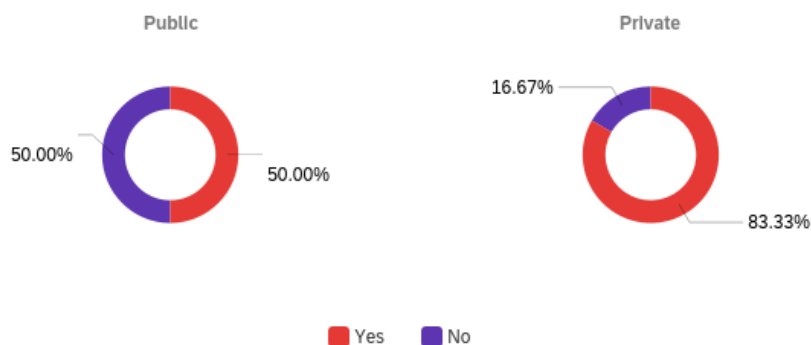
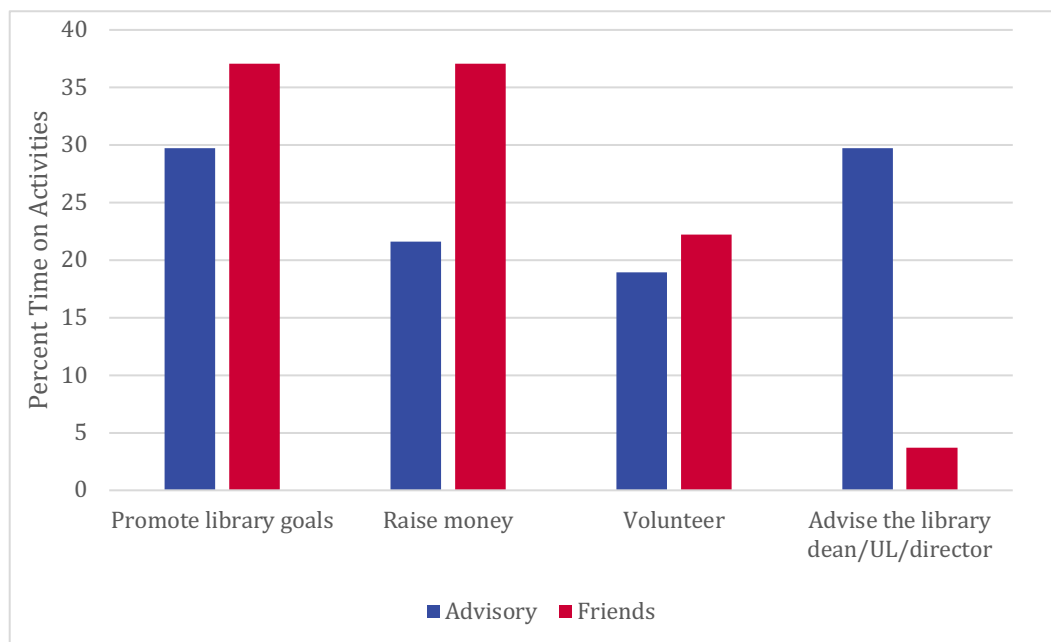


Figure C.5. Percent Time Allocated to Advisory and Friends Board Activities



Of those with an advisory group, 24% also have a Friends organization and 31% do not (Table C.6). Of those without an advisory group, 17% have a Friends organization. Twenty-eight percent have neither.

Five of the 16 institutions with advisory groups require a minimum contribution per year or term. The amount ranges from \$2,000 to \$15,000 with an average of \$5,400.

Table C.6. Number and Percentage Existence of Advisory and Friends Boards

Advisory	Friends			
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Yes	7	24	9	31
No	5	17	8	28

Respondents with an advisory group report that members skew towards inactive participation in public universities with more an uptick in active participation in private universities (Table C.9).

Table C.9. Participation Level of Advisory Board by Institution Type

<i>Participation</i>	<i>Public</i>		<i>Private</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Not active at all	8	33	2	33	10	33
Somewhat inactive	5	21	0	0	5	17
Neither active nor inactive	6	25	0	0	6	20
Somewhat active	4	17	3	50	7	23
Very active	1	4	1	17	2	7

Donor Support and Type

Table C.7. Estimated Distribution of Philanthropic Income by Library Area

<i>Support Area</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Archives and special collections	37.00	23.58
General support	28.83	22.35
Student support	12.67	12.36
Facilities	10.10	16.88
Resources and technology	9.33	10.06
Faculty support	2.07	3.30
Total	100.00	

Similar to the internal and comparison group data, respondents report the greatest level of support in archives and special collections with a mean of 37% out of 100% followed by “general support” with a mean of 29% out of a possible 100%. Variation is most extreme around these means which indicates a greater difference in these areas than in the “resources and technology” and “faculty support” categories.

Table C.8. Rank of Fundraising Importance for Libraries by Donor Type

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Donor Type</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Var</i>
1	Alumni	1.58	0.84	0.71
2	Non-alumni friends	2.19	1.04	1.08
3	Faculty and staff	3.46	0.97	0.94
4	Parents	4.96	1.22	1.5
5	Private foundations	3.73	1.79	3.2
6	Business and industry	5.54	0.97	0.94
7	Clubs and organizations	6.65	0.73	0.53
8	Other	7.88	0.42	0.18

Key Characteristics

The heat maps pictured in Figures C.6-C.9 lend a visual aid to the findings of key characteristics by donor resonance in the four areas of collections, student and researcher services, space and facilities, and community and donor events. The red shading indicates a strong, or “hot,” finding within the corresponding resonance row. In Figure C.6, the high resonance row has three red shaded areas for stewardship of collections pertinent to the region, of interest to the donor, and materials for research.

Figure C.6. Key Characteristics of Collections by Donor Resonance

Group	Provision of books and other materials for general use	General collection support - designated for subject area of interest	General collection support - designated for subject area of need	Provision and stewardship of rare or unique collections for research	Provision and stewardship of rare or unique collections of interest to the donor	Provision and stewardship of rare or unique collections specific to the local community or geographic region	Provision and stewardship of official campus archives	Digitization of rare or unique collections	Support for faculty open access or open educational resource publishing
High Resonance with Donors	6	9	4	16	21	19	8	9	4
Medium Resonance with Donors	12	13	17	12	6	8	13	14	9
Low to No Resonance with Donors	11	6	8	1	1	2	8	6	16

Figure C.7. Key Characteristics of Student and Researcher Services by Donor Resonance

Group	Textbooks for students	Technology (computers, peripherals, calculators)	Exploratory technology (AR, VR, recording studio)	Scholarships for students library workers	Funds for student research or scholarship	Funds for library employee training and development	Librarian information literacy instruction for students
High Resonance with Donors	11	10	10	19	17	2	7
Medium Resonance with Donors	9	12	13	6	10	11	8
Low Resonance with Donors	8	7	6	4	2	16	14

Librarian expertise in faculty assignment design	Librarian expertise in digital scholarship lifecycle	Librarian expertise in research and data lifecycle	Librarian research expertise in a specific subject area	Archivist expertise in specific collection or subject area
2	2	5	4	10
3	6	3	10	12
23	20	19	15	7

Figure C.8. Key Characteristics of Space and Facilities by Donor Resonance

Group	Functional spaces - conservation / preservation lab	Functional spaces - visualization	Functional spaces - GIS / maps	Functional spaces - screening room / films	Functional spaces - instruction room	Collaborative gathering spaces	Furniture for open multi-use "study" spaces	Safe spaces
High Resonance with Donors	9	6	2	3	10	15	9	7
Medium Resonance with Donors	6	7	9	8	7	8	10	9
Low Resonance with Donors	11	12	15	15	9	3	7	10

Figure C.9. Key Characteristics of Community and Donor Events by Donor Resonance

Group	Gala fundraising events	Seminars or lectures with featured academic speakers	Seminars or lectures with non-academic speakers	Volunteer opportunities	Opportunities to engage with students	Engage with library staff or faculty	Travel with other donors and library dean / staff	Exclusive "behind-the-scenes" access to materials and people
High Resonance with Donors	6	19	13	4	16	9	1	16
Medium Resonance with Donors	5	8	9	13	9	14	9	11
Low Resonance with Donors	17	1	6	10	3	5	17	1