

Panacea or double-edged sword?

The challenging world of development and fundraising in today's academic library

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If you were to walk into any academic library in the United States today and ask any number of staff members the issue that worries them most about the future of their library, there is a high likelihood that funding or budget issues would be the most-mentioned concern, particularly as our current economy strikes fear into the hearts of many. After a century of relatively strong support from their parent institutions, in the last couple of decades academic libraries have found themselves in a situation of rising costs for materials, staffing and building needs that are outpacing the support offered by their universities' budgeting. Commenting on the current status of the academic library in the university in relation to both its historical position and its funding, Browar and Streit expressed that "many [libraries] are viewed by senior institutional administrators as being less relevant to the newer goals and priorities of the university," continuing that "simply chanting that the library is the heart of the university will no longer suffice – if it ever did. Proof is now required that the heart is still beating."¹ Due to a number of factors, academic libraries face stagnant or diminishing budgets that cause difficult decision-making on the part of library administrators, including making up for budget shortfalls with cuts to collections and services. In metaphorical silent film terms, the hapless academic library is tied to the train tracks, with the freight train of rising prices for everything from databases to staffing to building upkeep barreling down upon it!

Enter your friendly development officer to save the day, galloping in on a white steed!! Mirroring what parent universities have done for many decades, academic libraries have recently taken matters into their own hands and assumed a much more active role in raising funds for enhancements to services, collections and building renovations. Yet, while most members of academe have embraced these undertakings as necessary, others raise general questions regarding fundraising ethics or that specifically challenge a library's need to raise funds to cover expenses for itself as an institution once assumed to be essential to every student and faculty member's academic career. It is provocative to consider whether fundraising is a cure-all for our budgetary woes, or is it a necessary evil that universities have thrust upon the library (and other academic departments)? Is procuring our own funds from willing donors an all-powerful panacea, or are our very fundraising efforts a double-edged sword, achieving monies that allow us to forge ahead with greater autonomy but undermining our coveted (and entitled?) place as dependents of our parent organizations?

In considering these questions, rather than offering a summary of fundraising "how to's," explaining all of the finer points of academic library development or looking closely at specific case studies – all of which others like Steele and Elder, Swan, and Butler have done admirably² – this paper investigates three topics which are arguably amongst the most provocative in the field: current perceptions of development challenges in academic libraries, academic library development staffing situations, and ethical considerations of academic library fundraising. This investigation is achieved concurrently with a wide-ranging traversal of literature in the library

fundraising field. Ultimately, this work asks a number of question through which the reader is challenged to think further about the development activities of universities and academic libraries and encourages librarians to consider all sides of fundraising issues before jumping onto the horse at a full gallop.

The library's historic place in the academy, and related funding

Before looking at development challenges, staffing situations and ethical questions prevalent in various academic library settings, it first is helpful to have in place an understanding of a number of changes in both the financial situation of academic libraries and their perceived importance to the universities they serve that have made fundraising a necessity for many over the last decades.

Throughout the majority of the twentieth century, the library played a vital role in daily life at colleges and universities throughout the United States. As the gateway to multitudes of resources that were in a variety of print formats, the university library was the place where students, faculty and others could find books and journals for their research, investigate special collections of archival materials, and enjoy a solemn atmosphere conducive to academic work. Library buildings were facilities constructed to house vast quantities of materials while accommodating university community users, and the sheer size and upkeep of increasingly larger print collections also required a large staff. Additionally, a large number of professional librarians were needed to catalog resources, to assist users in locating collections and to answer the reference "how do I's" of researching in subject areas.

Of course, all of the print collections and library staff came at real, increasing financial costs to the parent institution, but libraries typically enjoyed a position of important status in the life of the University and were supported financially by administrators who realized the high value of the library as *the* information provider and gateway for the present and future of their institutions. Funding for education, including universities, was sufficient (if not liberal) during the period of great growth post-World War II through the 1970's, and many campuses experienced building booms during the period to accommodate increasing numbers of students; there was a corresponding increase in university spending to support the building of numerous new libraries or the renovation of older facilities.³

Costly technological advances result in questions from universities, and libraries respond

While a culture of growth to support increasing student populations resulted in many new constructions, in the last decades of the twentieth century, the revolution and advancement of computing changed academic libraries forever. For patrons, the print card catalog was replaced by a local online version, itself replaced by a version available on the Internet via the Web, and patrons could check out materials via a computerized circulation system. Computerized local databases replaced paper indexes and allowed for easier research, and the replacement of these once-localized resources with Web-based versions allowed patrons to access materials virtually from any location within the building (or elsewhere). Integrated library systems allowed for automation and information sharing between historically disparate library functions, including acquisitions, cataloging and circulation, and additional Web-based resources have pushed more services, like reference consultation, into an online environment.

All of these exciting positive advancements in technology have had considerable negative effects on the budgets of universities and their libraries, as everything from computing infrastructure needs to periodic hardware and software costs to skyrocketing costs of annual electronic database subscriptions (not to mention specialized staff to manage these functions) has grown significantly. Rader states the situation succinctly in saying that “budgets for academic libraries in the US became inadequate during the last decade of the twentieth century due to the high cost of electronic information, new technology, annual cost increases for library materials, personnel, equipment and facilities.”⁴ As technology has allowed much of academic work to be completed online, and as the information available on various Internet sources has become increasingly prevalent, university administrators have questioned the importance of the library and its role as the keeper of and gateway to relevant information in the current academic environment – after all, if so much information is available (seemingly) for free online, why should a university continue to expend ever-increasing monies in support of a dying institution?

Academic libraries have responded to these administrators in at least two major ways. In the first response, libraries have argued that the electronic resources that they make available to patrons via database subscriptions is of a higher quality and reliability than resources available elsewhere online, and this has helped libraries to justify the ever-increasing costs levied upon them by the publishing industry. Dewey suggests that this situation is a very difficult one for institutions, however, citing the challenges for libraries to maintain adequate collections “given the 8 to 12 percent annual inflation on the cost of scholarly journals.”⁵ This lament that echoes throughout much of library literature is perhaps best exemplified by Corson-Finnerty, who makes a case that academic libraries are on a “starvation diet,” which he feels is manifest in three forms in stating that libraries are:

- Being asked to cut expenditures year after year or
- Being asked to live with the same dollars as last year, or
- Being given a slight raise each year – say 2 or 3%,

and continues that,

“Most readers will only think that #1 qualifies as starvation. But then most readers may not be aware that information costs are increasing at 6% or more per year. This means that the library’s acquisition budget must grow at 6% *just to keep buying at the same level*. This makes no allowance for expanding the collections. It does not recognize that libraries are often forced (by faculty or by publishers) to buy the same content in both digital and paper formats. And this makes no new money available for the R&D investment in software, personnel, and procedures that academic libraries must collectively make on behalf of the academy.”⁶

Since no answer to issues of database pricing seems immediately available, and given the necessity of academic libraries to continue to pay rising costs of materials to support the academic enterprise of the institution, it seems clear that libraries will continue to face budget shortfalls as parent institutions cannot – or choose to not – make up the differences.

Libraries’ second response to administrators’ questioning the importance of the library in the current academic setting has been a marked increase in outreach efforts to students to increase building use and the related re-envisioning and re-designing of library spaces to make them more welcoming to today’s university patrons. Academic libraries have seen the need to be more responsive to the needs and desires of their patrons as a way to reposition themselves as the heart of the university experience, as numerous “library as place” articles on academic libraries have discussed in the last decade. Dewey feels that libraries “must support the

university imperative to provide social, cultural, and intellectual experiences for students, most at a critical age in the maturation process,”⁷ and fulfilling these varied roles is not without a real economic cost. Due to a combination of an increasing view of a university library’s need to support more relaxed, comfortable work environments and the need to hold fewer hard copy materials on-site as patron become more online-oriented in their research, academic libraries find themselves in the position of needing to rethink and redesign spaces to provide better patron study and work areas, whether within their current walls through major renovations or through the building of additional spaces. All of this re-designing costs dollars that are not present in budgets that are already stretched thin by regular operating expenses. Perhaps one of greatest ironies in academe today is that, in order to maintain a level of relevance and justify their existence within the overall university setting, libraries are actively re-inventing spaces and services in ways that ultimately cost them additional funds that will likely not be forthcoming from their fiscally-challenged parent institutions.

Today’s reality is that these two issues – the ever-increasing costs of high-quality library collections resources and the costs related to renovation and space redesign – play major roles in the budgeting woes of the academic library. There are few line-items, if any, on a library’s budget that can be cut without causing major damage to the very fabric of the role and relevance of the library in the university setting. Beyond just one university or another, an additional financial consideration is the current economic instability in the US and the world and the uncertainty that global economic situation lends to the future viability of post-secondary education. Thus, as a result of a multitude of financial challenges, it has become increasingly imperative that responsive, proactive libraries pursue fundraising as one part of a long-term budgeting plan. Cervone points out that “now, perhaps more than ever, libraries need to be thinking creatively and actively about development issues...” and that “case studies of successful and unsuccessful strategies need to be shared and tested in diverse situations.”⁸ It can be argued that, in order to maintain or regain a place of importance and relevance that they have enjoyed historically, academic libraries must play more active roles in fundraising to ensure their own success, particularly since “state and/or institutional funding will never again be adequate to meet needs, much less goals of excellence”⁹ in the academic library setting.

Fundraising challenges, development staffing, and ethical questions

With a sense of the academic library’s historic role in the university and several major funding issues in mind, this paper first turns to an investigation of a number of perceived challenges that academic libraries face in their fundraising efforts, about which numerous authors have written. Next it examines views from several fundraisers about the staffing of a library’s development effort as they have attempted to overcome these challenges and establish fundraising programs within their libraries, including the roles of outreach and marketing in the success of the development endeavor. Finally, it considers important lingering ethical questions regarding fundraising and libraries that, although not as prevalent as they once were, still weigh on the minds of a number within the academic librarian profession.

Fundraising challenges: While universities as a whole and their various academic departments have been engaged in active fundraising pursuits for many decades, academic libraries are relatively new to the game. A number of examples in Butler’s “Successful Fundraising: Case Studies of Academic Libraries” suggest that few libraries were considered in overall university institutional fundraising campaigns before the 1970’s. The ideas of having library development staff or including development responsibilities as a part of library staff’s duties generally started in private institutions in the 1980’s; experienced academic library fundraiser Huang confirms this

history in a 2006 article, stating that “two decades ago, library development and fundraising for the library were virtually unknown.”¹⁰

Considering the challenge of the relative newcomer status of libraries in the academic fundraising realm, Corson-Finnerty writes:

“The library has come late to the party. Other guests have already arrived and claimed their chairs, their plates, their drinks. They have carved up the main dishes. In fact they have already sectioned the pie and scooped out the ice cream. Which leaves exactly what for the library?”¹¹

Through this vision of a banquet with which we all can relate, one can easily see some of the challenges that academic libraries may face in relation to the better-established fundraising efforts at their institutions – beyond being fashionably late, libraries may struggle for enough morsels to fill their bellies or even fight for table scraps! Kascus eloquently articulates further a number of historic challenges that she and others feel academic libraries face in fundraising, including the perceived difficulty of raising funds for the library, the perceived competition for funds with other academic departments, the lack of a defined constituency, the library director’s lack of fundraising expertise, and the director’s relative lack of power in the academy.¹² While some of these challenges have arguably changed in the last two decades since academic library fundraising efforts were begun in earnest, particularly the issues concerning library directors’ experience, many involved in the profession feel that the other issues still remain in reality or perception.

It is often felt that academic libraries occupy a somewhat unique situation within the academy, because they serve not one school’s population but belong to everyone who is affiliated with the parent institutions (and often other constituencies). Huang feels that “when the university’s focus turns to fundraising, libraries are at a competitive disadvantage with other academic units on campus because the university libraries do not have alumni” and, when regarding fundraising, “the library’s constituency can shrink to a small number of major gifts prospects.”¹³ While academic departments are often given the green light to approach their program’s degree recipients as a source of fundraising dollars, anecdotes from the literature suggest that libraries have struggled with territorial central university fundraisers in attempts to establish a development pool that is adequate.

However, contrary to numerous other fundraisers’ opinions, Dewey argues that many of these perceived difficulties are myths that hamper fundraising efforts and may be tackled and combated by the library with “sound and compelling stories about what constitutes a research library, how it is unique, and how it benefits students, faculty and the public...myths can be altered to demonstrate why fund-raising is not only possible but also successful and beneficial to the entire campus and beyond.”¹⁴ In her eyes, it is the responsibility of the library to make a consistently positive case to campus development and donors alike by having a real plan in place for long-term success. While acknowledging that there is no quick fix to many needs for additional funding, Osif agrees with Dewey in saying that donors identify with and feel like giving their funds for:

“Many reasons, but the altruistic one of identifying with an organization that performs a public good should make the giver quite happy... believing this message, library personnel can easily market the importance of supporting their library in its marketing and fundraising endeavors. Who would not want to be identified with the information, knowledge-rich library?”¹⁵

While this argument bears a kernel of truth and is backed by others who point to the emotional connectedness to the library as an information storehouse that drives a large number of donors, simply believing in this message may not be enough to accomplish funding, particularly in times of financial challenge when many other non-profits can make similar “for the common good” arguments.

Some academic libraries have established interesting campus partnerships to combat the “no specific alumni” challenge to fundraising success. Neal discusses partnerships that can develop between college sports programs and university libraries. Citing several examples of cooperation between high-profile athletic departments and the libraries at their parent institutions, including Penn State, Indiana University and LSU, Neal feels that “a fundraising partnership between college sports and academic libraries is a beneficial and effective solution” to the problem of the library’s lack of immediately-identifiable constituencies, particularly since the athletic teams “have captured the imagination through wide media exposure and are powerful forces in [both] society and university finances.”¹⁶ Creative solutions such as these, when applied as a part of an overall development plan, may indeed prove to be rewarding in financial terms for library systems.

Development staffing: Despite the challenges presented to them in selling the library as a destination for donor generosity, library development offices have made significant impacts on the last decade in particular, especially as their staffs have become more professionally sophisticated in maneuvering through the complex overall university fundraising structure. As is articulated later in this paper, some make the ethical argument that university fundraising should not differentiate between different departments, seeing the goals of one division as goals of all that benefit the common good. However, in reality, there is often much competition for donor dollars among university departments, and this reality plays out in the library’s ability to maintain funding for its necessary operations while still funding enhancements to improve the patron experience.

To achieve their goals, staffing approaches to fulfill libraries’ development activities have become increasingly sophisticated, sometimes with teams consisting of a number of development staff who work closely with the library director and university development. In a source oft-regarded as pivotal to understanding fundraising in libraries, “Becoming a Fundraiser,” Steele and Elder articulate the “uniqueness and complexity” of the university fundraising environment, citing the typical use of one of three models for academic organizational relationships and professional staffing:

- Development staff are hired by and paid by the library and function outside the realm of the central development office;
- Development staff are hired and paid by the library, the central development office, or a combination of the two and they report to both the library and the central development office; or
- Development staff are hired and paid by the central development office and are assigned to the library and possibly to other departments but report to only the central development office.¹⁷

There are positives and negatives that are inherent in each of these arrangements. In the first, the library bears the personnel expense but stands to reap the total rewards for their own coffers. However, the autonomy can be outweighed by a direct lack of involvement with the centralized office and could hinder success, as Jennings suggests that “development is not an activity that can function in a vacuum, nor does it work as a solo performance.”¹⁸ In both the

second and the third staffing arrangements, development officers may be required to split their time and efforts between multiple departments. This could, in turn, have a positive effect by expanding the possible areas across the University that may pique a perspective donor's interest and the officer's knowledge and contact base, but it could also result in a lack of focus on the needs of the library as a separate entity.

While the various reporting and funding structures for development officers vary among institutions, it is clear that individual academic libraries are sensing the importance of going about fundraising with a more professional staff than ever before. Dewey discusses the replacement of an "old boys' network" of academic fundraising with a "new era of development" that includes "individuals who were trained, through a combination of educational and work experiences, to be fund-raisers and development executives."¹⁹ Rooks feels that, just as libraries have their own lingo, "There is a lingo of fundraising...there are fundamentals and practices that will clearly distinguish the amateurs from the professionals. These distinctions will also define the success versus failure of your own fundraising efforts."²⁰ As a part of this trend toward higher levels of professionalism, increasing numbers of academic libraries are staffing development offices with well-trained development professionals and assistants who can both talk the talk and walk the walk, which can lead to greater rewards from a fundraising standpoint.

Whether or not libraries have dedicated professional development officers on staff, the roles that both the library director in particular and the rest of the library staff in general play in having successful fundraising campaigns and development plans cannot be overstated. One could argue that the academic libraries with strong leaders who both believe in and articulate a development vision should have the greatest success in their endeavors. Cervone feels that:

"Successful development depends on the leadership and participation of the library director because it requires visionary leadership...and an entrepreneurial leader – typically a library director – who understands that a good development plan balances the wishes of a donor and the needs of a library."²¹

A typical library director may spend a significant amount of her time on fundraising and development activities, and it is clear that a director needs to function in tandem with the development officers of either the library or the university to achieve the greatest return on investment in an increasingly professional setting. As a further illustration of the growing professional nature of the director's functions in development, Winston and Dunkley wrote an article that attempts to define development and fundraising competencies for leaders in academic libraries. They found, in addition to the need for LIS programs to cover more fundraising competencies in management/leadership classes, that:

"There should be opportunities for academic librarians to develop many of the leadership competencies associated with development and fund-raising...which include professional development opportunities provided by professional associations, colleges and universities; mentoring relationships with library administrators with development experience and expertise and development professionals; and opportunities to "shadow" the institution's development professionals on actual solicitation calls, for example."²²

Top administrators in academic library settings clearly need to be growing their development skills, particularly given the increasing importance of fundraising to the overall goals of their organizations, and it is important to consider that fundraising can be considered both a science and an art, parts of which can only be learned through experiential training.

Just as having a high level of professionalism in development officials and directors can reap greater rewards, it is also important that library staff members at all levels view themselves as a part of the development mission. Ercolano expresses that “library development programs often times need to overcome a perception that they are an extraneous operation – a unit that is not vital to the day to day operations or core mission of the library,” yet “a development professional’s work does benefit the entire library and, as such, should draw on the strengths of the entire library to achieve its goals.”²³ Along these lines, if the administration of the library has done its part in communicating the goals of fundraising efforts, library staff may be useful in achieving goals by helping to identify possible sources of funding and potential donors. Ruggiero and Zimmerman discuss several examples where donations were cultivated and achieved through the help of library staff and librarians; and they also present a list of suggestions for ways in which library staff may be active participants, including completing oral histories for donors, contributing collections purchase information as a part of annual stewardship reports for endowments, and even having staff write personalized thank you’s to major donors.²⁴ Besides all of these official duties they may assume, Pennell reminds us that “your staff, the people who deal with the public every day, are the most influential tool in building customer support. It starts with a smile, a friendly greeting and, when your library is in campaign mode, a commitment to be 100% on side and proactive.”²⁵ Again, the everyday roles of staff cannot be overstated, and it is critical that the entire organization is aware of and involved in development campaigns.

Increasingly, marketing and outreach staff members are playing larger roles in reaching potential donors, especially through online and other electronic means. The library website can be one very important tool in reaching a wider funding base. Welch writes about the importance of the academic library’s website as a marketing and public relations tool, noting how, in the past, “traditional vehicles for marketing libraries included press and news releases, collateral material, annual reports, posters, brochures, direct mail and newsletters.”²⁶ With the availability of email and direct online sites for fundraising, many of these traditional methodologies of making contact with donors have become less important. Hazard’s 2003 article analyzing the placement of development information on ARL library websites indicated a sharp increase of 26% in the appearance of links to fundraising activity on these sites in comparison to a study performed just three years earlier, and Hazard posits that that “this number is expected to increase over time as the Web dominates as the primary point of entry for many library services.”²⁷ While face-to-face contact is still regarded as critical in donor cultivation, it stands to reason that an entire generation of soon-to-be donors will be stimulated by the availability of information in online formats. Besides information about naming opportunities and Friends of the Library-type information, it is likely that digitization projects, particularly of special collections materials, will find a place of prominence on library websites. This will serve the twofold purpose of not only making this unique information available to the world but also promoting the work of the special collections staffs who are often involved closely with fundraising efforts.

As evidenced in this discussion of academic library development staffing, it can be said that, regardless of the personnel models, the most successful development plans are carried out through teamwork, which extends from professional fundraisers to top administrators to the front-line staff, marketing and outreach departments, and special collections staff, all of whom should work in tandem with overall university fundraisers.

Ethical questions: While the realities of the financial situations of current academic libraries point to the near-inevitability of fundraising as a regular, necessary activity of the organization that is carried out by increasingly capable and professional staff, many still question whether this increased funding self-sufficiency is a sort of monetary panacea that cures all woes. Will the

positive perceptions of a library's proactive approach impress the university administrations enough to increase library budgets in times of poor donations? Or, perhaps, do university administrators see self-sufficiency as an opportunity that allows them to consistently underfund their libraries to increasingly greater extents?

Furthermore, should librarians be asking ethical questions about the very nature of fundraising? For instance, does engaging in development activities require a sacrifice of professional librarian ethics? Amongst the skeptics, Jones calls development and the ethics of professional librarianship "uneasy bedfellows" and feels that "although academic libraries have a different mission from public libraries and a more narrowly defined clientele, an ethic of equality of access (and treatment) guides their service."²⁸ He feels that preferential treatment to big-money donors may result in lowered quality of service to the undergraduate masses, and that collections may suffer from additions that are accepted to please the whimsy of a wealthy donor.²⁹ While these questions should encourage further soul-searching, many in the field feel the ethical codes of fundraising professionals are surprisingly similar to those of librarians. Steele and Elder discuss the fear of "prostituting yourself, of doing something unbecoming or even sleazy" as unfounded, as long as one keeps in mind two important principles of library fundraising:

- Library fundraising seeks consonance between a donor's wishes and a library's needs. Hence, it should proceed in an open, ethical, balanced, win-win way.
- Fundraising is judged to be successful when it results in gifts that contribute to the strategic vision for the library; gifts should free a library to achieve its goals rather than hamper or distract it from its mission.³⁰

Viewed in these terms, it is the responsibility of the development officers and the director to set the correct tone and keep fundraising tied to the mission and goals of the library and institution. If one keeps this in mind, it would seem that the ethical question is not *whether* we should raise funds but *what* we should accept and *under what conditions*, stressing the importance of adherence to the overall mission and vision of the institution.

Several authors consider other ethical situations with fundraising. Corson-Finnerty voices a strong opinion about libraries' struggles for acknowledgement by university officials, saying that "It is neither logical nor efficacious to place the academy's primary information provider as the campus art gallery, or the performing arts program, or the basketball program – all of which may be worthwhile, even critical to a subset of the enterprise – but none of which are [sic] fundamental to the enterprise."³¹ He feels that "logic would suggest that any fundraising for library needs would be similar to fundraising for scholarship – a task that every gift officer would undertake, from the president on down."³² Coming from an experienced development director at a major research institution, these statements certainly make one consider the ethics of campus fundraising when universities make distinctions between departments. Should the university not care about the success of the whole enterprise? And if it does, why are libraries, particularly those who are willing to be self-sufficient in fundraising tasks, assigned donor pools that are often filled with non-givers or small-money prospects? While individual readers should consider these questions, it is of utmost importance that we all realize the prevalence of these issues in many university development settings and the effects they can have on the relationships between the library, the larger development whole and donors.

Osif looks at the ethics of engaging in marketing and fundraising, acknowledging that for many in libraries "the very thought...might result in a shudder or a cringe. There is a purity, a higher

purpose to librarianship;” going on to say, however, that “maybe we need to see how important it is. It can be done with the higher purpose of promoting something truly worthwhile.”³³ As one reads accounts of library development working to cultivate donors and successful stewardship of gifts, it is clear that fundraisers have an ethical calling that is related to those of librarians in many ways. Development professionals aim to fulfill donors’ wishes by allowing them to participate in helping others and furthering a greater good; similarly, libraries provide patrons with knowledge-building information to further a greater good. In her book exploring the spiritual nature of libraries and librarianship, Maxwell makes a positive case for fundraising:

“Realizing the profound meaning of books and libraries in people’s lives, I see that it can and should – lead directly to financial gain for libraries. Too often librarians see fund raising as a distasteful activity, one that sells out the purity of their activity...but this attitude demonstrates a lack of understanding of both the basics of fundraising and the meaning of libraries in people’s lives. Rather than simply exploiting rich people, allowing those of means to support an institution or cause is actually doing them a favor. Imagining one’s memory or that of a loved one continuing beyond their physical time on earth is a powerful motivator for financial donors.”³⁴

When one overcomes the initial knee-jerk negative reaction that can often accompany the thought of asking for money, most thoughtful librarians can see how the reality of doing good works for the future of others is a powerful motivator that binds librarianship and fundraising in ways not immediately obvious on the surface.

Conclusion

Before the final credits can roll on our timeless tale of the good and evil in the wild world of fundraising, the question remains: is development the panacea for solving academic library budget shortfalls that its popular acceptance might suggest? Or is it the double-edged sword that both gives and takes away? Literature suggests it may be some of both. It is clear that through a successfully executed campaign and planning, by working with a team within the library and throughout the university to overcome perceived challenges, development can be the key that unlocks the doors to enhancing our physical buildings brings service enrichments and richer collections to users, who may then enjoy more work-conducive information-filled environments and, in time, become the next generation of supportive donors. Development is also a way for libraries to share the library’s vision of a better future with donors with whom these visions may resonate; and, in the process, reputable library development officials will maintain their professional ethics in the process of securing donations. Yet it is also critical that libraries maintain a sense of their missions and goals and constantly work through campus politics to make their parent institutions aware of the value of the collections and services that they provide to the whole of the university, with the hopes that the parent institutions will both support the library at more sufficient operating budget levels and assist in fundraising efforts for enhancements.

Metaphorically speaking, if a development officer rides in on a white steed to rescue the hapless library from those train tracks, then all levels of library staff must assist the development office in actively untying the ropes and jumping onto the fundraising horse; and, along the subsequent journey, together they must all enlist the aid of the helpful sheriffs (the academic institution and administrations) to catch the outlaws (greedy publishers, the wavering economy, etc.) before riding off into the sunset to live happily ever after.

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