



CPNS Mission

To bring to the community the benefits of teaching, research, technology and service relevant to the philanthropic and nonprofit communities.

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Survey of Fundraising and Alumni Relations 2007 (SOFAR 2007)

Against a backdrop of increasing interest in higher education philanthropy, the Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies (CPNS) surveyed Australian Universities to begin benchmarking their fundraising and alumni relations.¹ This data relates to the calendar year 2006, being the first full annual survey.

Who Participated?

Eighteen of the 39 universities completed the survey, being 46% of all Australian institutions. All of the various types of institutions were represented such as Group of Eight (Go8), Australian Technology Network (ATN), Innovative Research Universities Australia (IRU) and New Generation Universities (NGU).

Does the SOFAR 2007 Survey represent a national snapshot of Higher Education fundraising?

No. Although all categories of universities participated, the total population characteristics are sufficiently unclear or unknown to prevent generalisation of the SOFAR sample results to the total university sector. SOFAR 2007 will be of use to participating universities to measure and improve their own endeavours and to the whole sector by identifying broad trends. In future years, with greater participation, refining of the survey and universities' data collection procedures a national snapshot will be possible. This survey kickstarts the process.

What contributions did individuals make?

Universities received 5,905 (median 201) contributions from individuals amounting to \$8,594,147 (median \$348,970) with a further \$1,558,240 pledged. More than half the universities (56%) received contributions from their council or senate members. However, over three quarters (77%) did not have or receive a contribution from those responsible for overseeing the universities' foundation.

What contributions did Australian corporations and foundations make?

Australian companies are significant contributors to universities with 90% of universities receiving contributions worth in total \$7,343,521 with a further \$8,789,119 pledged. Only a relatively small amount is sourced from corporate foundations (\$115,000).

¹ The survey also included New Zealand universities, university colleges and schools, but only Australian universities are reported here.

What contributions did Australian statutory corporations make?

Government's statutory corporations (e.g., corporatised agencies such as power utilities) appear to be significant contributors to universities with 90% of universities receiving contributions worth in total \$183,235,320 (median \$274,500) with a further \$10,113,855 pledged.

What contributions did international sources make?

Contributions from international sources are of high value (\$29,620,890), but scarce (26) and less than half the universities (44%) received them. A further \$9,269,196 is pledged from international sources.

What is the role of bequests?

Only eight bequests were realised in 2006 being \$4,127,842 in value. It is estimated that known bequests total \$52,347,808 with a median of \$1,485,000.

What is the role of the University's Annual fund?

Alumni accounted for more than 90% of gifts (median 93.83%) to the Annual fund, with a value of nearly 90% (median 88.8%) of the total given. This was followed by staff (median 3.1%) with a percentage of total median value of 3.5%.

What is the total of contributions for 2006?

The 18 universities that participated in SOFAR had a total of \$246,469,143 in contributions (including gifts in kind) with a median of \$1,611,651. We caution against simply grossing up the amount to gain an estimate of total contributions of all Australian Universities because of the unknown representativeness of our sample and the inherent limitations of an initial survey as explained below.

At what level is the engagement with alumni?

Universities are aware of some 1,204,782 living alumni and have an address for about 60%. The median of alumni with known addresses is 44,040 with a median of 6 domestic alumni chapters and 5 active international chapters. The median of alumni attending a function during the year was less than 3%.

What is the level of intentional management of future donor prospects?

Ten universities reported managing (i.e. in the process of building a stronger relationship with) a total of 694 prospects or donors with a total gift potential of an estimated \$176.5 million. A further 3,072 prospects and donors with unrated donation potential are being managed by these universities.

How are Development Offices staffed?

There were a total of 140.8 equivalent full time staff in development offices in the sample with a median of 6.30 full time staff. The range of staffing levels is significant with a span from 0 to over 20. In 2007, it was anticipated that more than 30 positions would be created with most attention on general fundraising (15) and database staff (9).

In what phase of fundraising campaigns are universities?

Fifty percent of institutions have units involved in a major campaign at present, but only two were in the active publicised phase. Those in active campaign mode had reached more than 65% of their campaign goal. The total of campaign goals is \$37,600,000 with a median of \$3,250,000.

What are the expenditures of Development Offices?

Nearly half the expenditure is devoted to staffing costs (46%) and with consultants (12%) accounts for nearly 60% of expenditures. After salaries and consultants, the next highest median expenditure was media (9%). The median total expenditure was \$310,133.

How confident are the researchers with the data?

As with the initial stages of any financial benchmarking project, the results are dependent on institutions being able to collect and report information on a standard comparative basis. Until reporting systems are standardised and their integrity proved, the data will need to be interpreted with caution.

We have used the median to mitigate the large range in the data. The median is the middle of a distribution: half the scores are above the median and half are below the median. The median is less sensitive to extreme scores than the mean and this makes it a better measure than the mean for highly skewed distributions which were evident in some results.

Will there be a SOFAR survey in 2008?

CPNS intends to replicate the SOFAR survey in 2008 and all Higher Educational institutions, residential colleges and schools will be invited to participate in an online survey in March 2008. Again, only those institutions that participate in the survey will receive the full survey results.

Survey of Fundraising and Alumni Relations 2007 – Electronic Download

Newton, Cameron J. and McDiarmid, Daniel C. and Scaife, Wendy A. and McGregor-Lowndes, Myles (2008) Survey of Fundraising and Alumni Relations 2007 (SOFAR 2007). CPNS Working Paper No. 38. Brisbane: QUT.

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