

Academic Library Friends Groups

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Importance of Fundraising

- Inadequacy of traditional funding sources
- Desire of institutions to form closer links with communities
- Advertising and support

UTL Friends Groups

- Friends of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library (FOF)
- Library Associates (LA)
- Other informal activities, e.g. events in special library departments

FOF

- Formed in 1984
- 220-230 members

FOF Terms of Reference and Governance

- No terms of reference
- Steering Committee of 9 – 4 Library, 5 non Library
- Non Library members major donors to Fisher Library

FOF Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

- One meeting per year
- Financial statement
- Membership report
- Plans for next season
- Show and tell of some new acquisitions

FOF Activities

- 5 endowed lectures per year
- 3 exhibitions + catalogues
- 2 issues of Halcyon newsletter

FOF staff

- Director, Advancement
- Admin staff .75 fte

Library Associates (LA)

- Formed in 2004
- Friends of Library
- Steering Committee – Chief Librarian + two volunteers (major donors)
- Staffing – same .75 fte

LA Terms of Reference

- Assist and advise the Chief Librarian in the development and promotion of the Library Associates Program
- Advise on identifying resources to enhance the program
- Advise on activities of interest to the core group
- Participate in an outreach program to engage and involve donors in volunteer activities in the Library
- Act as ambassadors for the Library and promote awareness of the Library's needs within the university community and beyond

LA program

- Three events / year
- Two lunches with a speaker
- An exhibition opening

Research 2007

- Friends of Fisher Group (FOF) - 20 years
- Initial stages of setting up Library Associates (LA)
- Mandate to raise funds for Library, except Fisher
- Assess secondary sources dealing with library fund raising groups with a focus on peer institutions
- Document FOF terms of reference, business processes and goals to use as a benchmark for developing the LA
- Develop a plan for LA Group based on findings

Lessons from research study

- **Number of groups** – Well nigh impossible to have two or more competing groups
- **Online fundraising** – Web sites used extensively for online solicitation, especially of younger members. Many experts suggest future of library development dependent upon internet technologies we use every day and have yet to tap the full potential of for fundraising
- **Innovation** – Includes choice of spokesperson or event, technology to avoid labour intensive backend tasks while maintaining critical personal touch at front end

Lessons learned

- **New members** – Online fundraising can bring a new and diverse generation into the fold of library sponsorship. According to some polls, the next generation of donors is online. Virtual Friends Groups are often appropriate for younger donors who may not have the time or inclination to attend events. Once a pool of such cyberdonors is formed, various individuals or groups with the same interests can be targeted for meetings, lunches and dinners, tours and funding pitches
- **Recognizing donors** – Various levels of giving have different tokens of thanks. For example, donors at the lowest levels receive small tokens, while donors at the highest levels receive more lavish tokens of thanks

Lessons learned

- **Success factors** – events and activities are most successful when:
 - Target audience clearly identified. Important to target small groups for specific fundraising initiatives instead of trying to cast net widely. Arrange special interest events such as tours, presentations of projects and similar activities
 - Local issues and opportunities fully tapped as potential vehicles for campaigns and for memberships

Lessons learned

- Concentrate and coordinate efforts – Not generally advisable to form splinter groups
- One possibility -create overarching fund raising structure and have specialized activities spun off under oversight of main coordinating body
- Elaborate events – There is a time and place for elaborate events such as landmark celebrations but many institutions also hold 15 minute to 30 minute receptions or half hour talks with modest refreshments

Lessons learned

- **Governance and Accountability**– Most fund raising enterprises have large steering committees with steering committee members drawn from the major donor pool. An annual business meeting is held for all donors wishing to attend

Recommendations

- An umbrella Group be formed
- A larger Committee for LA be formed
- Library Advancement website be revised extensively and made much more interactive and compelling
- Effort put into cyber fundraising and communicating with donors electronically in an attempt to reach new audiences

Recommendations

- Roster of more frequent and more modest events be drawn up and implemented
- No membership fees be charged for the LA Group
- An AGM be held once per year
- Clerical procedures be streamlined as much as possible without compromising donor goodwill and expectations

Recommendations

- More use made of volunteer help at events and for mailings, etc
- Electronic systems such as donor database be streamlined and made as simple, interactive and as error free as possible
- A scaled to donation means of thanks be drawn up and implemented

Recommendations

- The above recommendations are made, not with a view to all of them being implemented immediately, but for consideration by the Chief Librarian and the Advancement Group in the Library. If implemented, they should be tried out a few at a time and their effectiveness assessed. The nature of fundraising is such that any plan must of course be constantly revisited and modified, and not be seen as cast in stone