

**4-year Public Midwest University President's Role in Institutional Fundraising from
the Perspective of the Chief Development Officer**

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Abstract

Previous research has been conducted on the role of the university president in fundraising from the perspective of the university president. However, the scope of current literature is limited regarding information from university chief development officers about how to understand how fundraising impacts their university presidency roles and responsibilities, and what characteristics and experiences are needed to be successful with fundraising. The focus of this study was to further understand the university president's role in university fundraising by examining the perspective of the chief development officer at 4-year Public Midwest universities. This study used a qualitative phenomenological research design using a semi-structured interview protocol. This study's research questions explored how fundraising priorities impact the university president's role in fundraising, and what characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success in fundraising. The sample size (n = 8) included chief development officers sharing their experiences and viewpoints on university presidents' involvement with fundraising regarding priorities, characteristics, and experiences necessary for university presidents to achieve success in fundraising. The interviews were transcribed, then analyzed, and developed into categories and themes. Three major themes emerged as a result of the data analysis: fundraising priorities that impact the university president's role, university president's characteristics, and experiences that are necessary to achieve fundraising success. The results of this study add some additional understanding to the limited current research about how the university president's role has changed over the past five years due to the impact of fundraising priorities, what priorities impact the university president's role, along with

characteristics, and experiences ideally needed to engage with institutionally-related fundraising initiatives.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who have supported me throughout my educational journey. To my wife, Lauren, for your unconditional love, support, understanding, and encouragement. You have been there for me throughout this process, and supportive of my pursuit of my professional dreams. Our son, Jasper, thank you for inspiring me to continue this journey and to better myself so I can be the best role model for you. To my parents, you have believed in me through all my endeavors. Thank you for challenging me to be a lifelong learner and to always understand that an education can never be taken away. To the team of family and friends, your continued encouragement, enthusiasm, and support you have provided Lauren and me as we navigated my pursuit of a doctoral degree. You all have kept me committed even though I missed gatherings, celebrations, and special moments due to coursework. I am forever grateful for the love and support everyone has offered this small-town first-generation kid to reach his educational dreams.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Higher education has been an influential aspect of society for hundreds of years, and yet the financial model for institutions is changing rapidly (Ruch, 2021). Along with the financial model changing, a larger administrative role for the university president is focusing on fundraising rather than academic leadership (Bornstein, 2005; Kaufman, 2009). Higher education has seen increased benefits cost for faculty and staff and decreased state funding of higher education, requiring institutions to make up the deficits by raising their tuition or fundraising (Dew, 2012). With the increasing tuition prices rising every year, families question if attending college is worth the return on investment (Seltzer, 2017).

Studies of higher education presidents have focused on their changing role, focus areas, passions, and their involvement in fundraising (Al-Asfour et al., 2021; Martin, 2021; Shields, 2021; Stafford, 2017; Sturgis, 2006). With the financial and fundraising requirements and implications put on university presidents, their relationship with the institution's foundation is more critical than ever. The purpose of the following study is to examine a university president's responsibilities, experiences, and ideal characteristics needed to engage with institutionally-related fundraising from the perspective of the institutionally-related chief development officer. By examining the involvement of a university president's participation in fundraising from the perspective of a chief development officer, the current study will also provide a better understanding of how the university president's role has changed over the past five years due to the impact of fundraising priorities.

Background

The fundraising aspect surrounding university presidents has functioned with the belief that there will be ample financial support to fulfill the mission of the institution (Ruch, 2021). Overall, state funding for public two- and four-year colleges for the 2017 school year was nearly \$9 billion below its 2008 level, after adjusting for inflation (Mitchell et al., 2017). In January 2021, Governor Laura Kelly proposed a \$37 million budget cut for Kansas Higher Education institutions, which was the most significant budget reduction since 2009 (Garcia, 2021). Kansas higher education is not alone in experiencing state funding cuts, similar budget cuts happened to public universities in the state of Missouri, \$41 Million in FY 2021 (Garcia, 2021). Other Midwest states such as Iowa report state appropriation levels at \$63 million below appropriations in 2001 (Miller, 2022). In 2021, North Dakota higher education institutions saw a 7.5% reduction in formula pay rate, leading to a \$9.3 million state appropriations cut (Mook, 2021). North Dakota is also a state where 75% of the university system's budget comes from tuition dollars, grants, donations, and other federal funds (Mook, 2021). Another Midwest state, South Dakota, has cut \$250 million from state funding since 2010, while the decrease in budget led to increased tuition, yet decreased enrollment has also created a loss of revenue for institutions (Yost, 2020). According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in 2018 the Midwest state of Nebraska was funding higher education two percent less than in 2008, which led to increasing student tuition by \$1,733, raising tuition to account for 23 percent of a family's median household income (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2019). Since 2016, the Midwest states of Missouri, North Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, and South Dakota have seen a decrease in full-time equivalent

enrollment (State Higher Education Finance [SHEF], 2022). According to a report published by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, the change in state general operating appropriations from 2001-2019 for South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri decreased by more than 20% (Cummings et al., 2021). With state support dwindling and rising tuition impacting families and lawmakers, public institutions must step up their advancement game (Gardner, 2017).

Private institutions nationwide have historically had more focus on fundraising than public institutions (Ruch, 2021). With the increased financial pressures and the need to use alternative revenue sources, the public institution's president role has been reshaped (Ruch, 2021). University presidents have indicated that fiscal restraints have become a top priority and demand of their positions (Ruch, 2021). In general, more traditional presidents surveyed tend to think of higher education as a collegial, intellectual community where they are the academic leaders (Seltzer, 2017a). New presidents, meanwhile, see themselves through a financial and operational lens and as a leader who needs to get things done despite the collaborative nature of campuses—a CEO role, not in the top-down sense, but rather a general manager surrounded by a skilled executive team (Selingo et al., 2017). In a recent study, college presidents shared that most of their time was spent on financial management and fundraising (American Council on Education [ACE], 2017). Recent reports have shared that the majority of higher education presidents come from serving in the academic affairs field (ACE, 2023). With the increased importance of fundraising apparent, many presidents still lack the knowledge and experience in fundraising and are provided with unclear expectations for fundraising (Hodson, 2010; Selingo et al., 2017).

The presence or absence of successful fundraising can be the difference between institutional success and turmoil (Shaw & Shaw, 2013). Fundraising, in particular, is essential from a president's first day in office and will continue to grow in importance over time (Selingo et al., 2017). Yet, presidents have shared that they feel most ill-prepared to provide oversight in fundraising (Selingo et al., 2017). University presidents expect state funding to continue to decrease, and revenue will need to continue to come from fundraising (Myers, 2016). Due to the increased need for fundraising, university presidents need to further their understanding of their institutional fundraising role (Pisors, 2022). While presidents must continue to grow their knowledge of fundraising, there is little literature from the perspective of a foundation president about the characteristics and experiences university presidents need to be successful fundraisers. This study will help to identify how the fundraising priorities have impacted the university president's roles.

Statement of the Problem

The role of the university president has changed dramatically. Sontz (1991) shared that historically, "the president of a small colonial college was generally a theologian, a practicing minister, and an integral member of the faculty as well" (p. xxv). Today, the modern president focuses on providing more with less, navigating the political arena, and being evaluated by the financial success of the institution (Apthorp, 2012; Bornstein, 2009). University presidents are less prepared or trained in fundraising throughout their careers (Goddard, 2009; McGee, 2003). With more university presidents being less prepared and trained for the fundraising aspect of the position, the degree of growth for an institution will be in question (ACE, 2017).

The majority of recent research conducted on university presidents and involvement in fundraising focuses on institutional fundraising from the perspective of the university president (Goodard 2009; Myers, 2016; Shields, 2021, Stafford, 2017) or around community college presidency (Abernathy, 2014; Besikof, 2010). Research also has only focused on single institutions rather than on a general application (Schanz, 2012). Studies have been conducted that concentrate on fundraising in higher education (Caboni & Proper, 2007; G. Gearhart & Miller, 2018; Martin, 2021; Ruch, 2021; Shields, 2021). The role of the university president in fundraising is documented; however, the president's collaborative role with alumni, foundation boards, employees, and corporate partners in fundraising is still missing (Schanz, 2012). A university president's involvement in fundraising emphasizes the need to work closely with college foundations, board members, and employees so that all parties can fulfill the priorities of their respective entities (Myers, 2016; Phelan, 2005; Shields, 2021).

There is a need for presidents to understand how their institution's foundation leadership would like to see presidents involved in institutional fundraising (King & Gomez, 2008). Further research is needed to provide information to help university presidents with fundraising, so they can be more effective fundraising leaders. Interviewing the chief development officer may provide reflective and educational information for current and future university presidents to understand how fundraising impacted their presidency roles and responsibilities, and what characteristics and experiences are needed to be successful with fundraising.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to further understand the university president's role in university fundraising from the perspective of the chief development officer. More specifically, the study explored the perspective of the chief development officer and how fundraising priorities have impacted the university president's role in fundraising over the past five years. Additionally, the study collected information about characteristics and experiences that a chief development officer views as necessary for a university president to be successful in fundraising.

Significance of the Study

When looking at a university president's pathway to the presidency, there is very seldom one commonly traveled path. The formula for becoming president is unknown. Few current presidents have prior presidential experience (Hartley & Godin, 2009). What has become a shared constant priority for a university president, no matter institutional size or characteristics has been the need to fundraise (Sturgis, 2006; Wesley, 2007). Fundraising contributes nearly 30% of higher education expenditures (Council for Advancement and Support of Education [CASE] 2019). The need to fundraise is continual, and there has never been such a more substantial need for university presidents to provide strong fundraising leadership (Al-Asfour et al., 2021). The relationship between a university president and an institutionally related foundation is essential for continued financial support and institutional growth (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2023). There is research that focuses on community colleges, private institutions, and heavily endowed institutions (Beltran, 2018; Goddard, 2009; Myers, 2016). However, there are no existing studies that focus on the president's role as

perceived by Chief Development Officers at 4-year public universities in the Midwest. This study will provide a look at 4-year public universities from the Midwest region and provide a perspective from the Chief Development Officers at the institutions.

This study will provide information and expectations directly from the chief development officer's perspective. The current study explored the duties and roles of presidents in fundraising, along with identifying traits, characteristics, and experiences needed in a president to achieve fundraising success. The study provided valuable information for aspiring university presidents as they look to build their skills and experiences. The study is useful for chief development officers to further their relationships, interactions, and utilization of university presidents in fundraising. The data will help close the knowledge gap needed to be a university president, especially for individuals with minimal fundraising experience. The knowledge obtained from the research can be used by university presidents and chief development officers current and future by providing information about an effective and efficient fundraising environment for institutional success.

Delimitations

As defined by Lunenburg and Irby (2008) delimitation is, "self-imposed boundaries set by the researcher on the purpose and scope of the study" (p. 134). Delimitations placed on this study were that all participants were chief development officers. The researcher limited the research setting to the 4-year public universities in the Midwest region of the United States. Lastly, participants had to have at least five years of experience within the chief development officer role.

Assumptions

“Assumptions are postulates, premises, and propositions that are accepted as operational for purposes of the research” (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 135). There are several assumptions regarding the population and study design. The first assumption of the study was that there is a working relationship between the university president and the chief development officer. By having a working relationship, the information collected from the chief development officer provides firsthand examples of fundraising situations and scenarios. The second assumption of the study was that all participants provided truthful and accurate information from their perspectives and to the best of their abilities.

Research Questions

RQ1

From the perspective of 4-year public universities chief development officer, how have fundraising priorities impacted the university president's role in fundraising over the past five years?

RQ2

From the perspective of a 4-year public universities chief development officer, what characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success in the fundraising role?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are provided to allow for a common understanding of the terminology used throughout the study.

Institutionally Related Foundations. A non-profit support organization raising and managing private resources in support of public institutions of higher education.

Typically incorporated as public charities under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The primary purpose of the college and university is to help raise private funding and manage contributed assets (Bass, 2010).

Success. Fundraising success is a process that often begins years before a donor gives. To ensure fundraising success, the trustees, president, and vice president must understand and fulfill their roles and responsibilities for a complete partnership (Stafford, 2017). Partners must define and agree on the institution's fundraising priorities, goals, time, and dialogue to commit to the outcomes of the foundation (Shaw & Shaw, 2013).

Fundraising/Development. The efforts by an institution's administration to ask for and secure funds through campaigns, special events, planned giving, and annual giving programs (Proper et al., 2009).

Private funds. Charitable donations are a source of external funds provided by individuals, foundations, and corporations for higher education institutions (Bass, 2010).

Chief Development Officer. Higher education institution role that oversees the functions of development and fundraising. There are several names used for this position including President of the Foundation, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Executive Director for the Foundation, Director of Development, etc. (Stevick, 2010).

University President. The leader or chief executive officer of the university reports to a board of directors. Presidential duties vary by institution but most commonly are responsible for strategic leadership, including leading the institution's fundraising efforts (ACE, 2017; Sturgis, 2006). For this study, university presidents will refer to 4-year public institution presidents.

University President's Characteristics. Essential personal and professional traits are perceived as necessary to be competent and fulfill the roles of college presidents, especially in areas such as fundraising (Shields, 2021).

University President's Experiences. Prior background in fundraising practices through personal experiences, social organizations, memberships in professional associations, external board services, pertinent certifications, conferences attended, or coursework with a fundraising focus (Shields, 2021).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the following sections: background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose statement, significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and the definition of terms. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature. Chapter 3 explains the qualitative research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, limitations, and summary. In chapter 4, results include findings from the interviews and results of the study. The final chapter includes a study summary, findings related to the literature, implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature related to the historical overview of the university president's role in fundraising, personal characteristics, and experiences that may influence the university president's fundraising, recent trends in university presidents' roles, fundraising resources, and training opportunities for university presidents. The first section includes a historical overview of the university president's role in fundraising. The second section includes a review of university presidents' characteristics and experiences that may impact fundraising. The third includes an overview of recent trends in the university president's role related to fundraising. The fourth and final section includes an overview of resources and training opportunities for university presidents that involve fundraising education components.

Historical Overview of University Presidents' Role in Fundraising

Presidents' institutional roles have shifted from faculty appointments with teaching backgrounds to roles focusing more on institutional management (Gearhart et al., 2020). Since higher education institutions started in the US, they have always remained the primary decision-maker yet reporting to other constituents (Gearhart et al., 2020). It wasn't until the mid-1990s that university presidents' role in fundraising emerged. It is believed that Cook's (1994) *Courting philanthropy: The role of university presidents and chancellors in fund raising* dissertation was the first to provide an in-depth look at the role of the university president in the fundraising process (Myers, 2016). Cook (1994), shared that the role of academic presidents in fundraising was important to study considering the history and the future outlook of financial difficulties facing higher

education administrators. “The importance of the fundraising function of the president cannot be underestimated. Since the founding of colleges, a presidential expectation is that ample resources will be available to support the institutional mission” (Ruch, 2021, p.1). Hodson (2010), shared that due to the 2008 economic concerns of rising costs, declining donations, and increased enrollment competition, fundraising took an increased priority for university presidents. Additionally, the role of the university president has grown to include a significantly larger amount of time spent on fundraising (Piccolo, 2020).

Since 2001, The ACE has produced a report based on a study conducted by the American Council on Education’s Center for Policy Research and Strategy about the profile of American college and university presidents. A survey was sent to 3,615 presidents, chancellors, and CEOs in 2016. The report (ACE, 2017) shared numerous factors about the demographics, pathways, and experiences of American college and university presidents. The ACE (2017) study also reported on the duties and responsibilities of a college president. The study shared a list of areas that occupy college presidents' time, with 65 percent of presidents citing budgets and financial management along with fundraising being their top areas of time spent.

Based on the ACE survey conducted in 2023, the average age of a president based on their selected year has dropped to 60 years old, 83.6% of the college presidents have a doctorate and are most likely to have studied education or higher education, social sciences, or humanities and fine arts. The survey reflects on the path to the presidency, 18% came from outside of higher education, while 54% came from an academic-focused position immediately before the presidency, and only 8% came from a nonprofit/business

executive role. The ACE (2023) report illustrated that most presidents surveyed did not have direct professional experience in fundraising or advancement, while fundraising and advancement may impact their function in their presidential role.

Piccolo (2020) conducted a study that examined how the role of the university president has evolved while including the expectations of fundraising. The study showed that as government funding continues to decline, it has required universities to be more dependent on private resources through fundraising. This increased dependency also has required presidents to actively engage in the fundraising process, especially with endowed or significant gift donations. The study found themes outlining the priorities of a president's role. Themes from the study included expanding needs and shrinking government support necessitating increased fundraising efforts, communicating the university story is essential, developing relationships must be a priority, and rethinking the traditional pathway to the presidency. Additionally, this study indicated the role of the university president continues to be an important and complex role, with an increasing need for adaptation and pivoting. Piccolo's study found that as university presidents continue to acclimate to their changing role, their focus on securing private resources to offset the decline in government funding is essential. This aspect of the Piccolo study illustrates how financial institutions have been impacted and has created added pressure on university presidents to be involved in fundraising (Piccolo, 2020).

Gednalske (2022), examined how university presidents transition into this role in higher education. The study also shared how a presidential change (independent variable) influenced key performance indicators, enrollment, financial health, and fundraising, at private, not-for-profit 4-year colleges and universities. The key performance indicators

included enrollment looking at full-time and part-time fall enrollment; financial health including the cost of attendance; total revenue; total expenditures; instruction costs; academic, student, and institutional support; and fundraising including restricted gifts, unrestricted gifts, and endowment assets (Gednalske, 2022). In addition, the study shared an understanding of how the key performance indicators impact a presidential transition for long-term success, those indicators included financial difficulty to even campus closure (Gednalske, 2022). This study offered recommendations for practitioner's transition into a presidential role to minimize the regression and support progress with a new president specifically in fundraising. Nehls (2007), shared that in higher education advancement circles, donors give to people. If donors don't have a relationship or confidence in the primary decision maker of an institution, the college president, then donors won't invest generously (Nehls, 2007). Gednalske (2022) shared that the president's role has and will continue to evolve. Through their transitions, they must continue to strive towards the demands of others, reach goals set by institutional boards, while keeping high academic standards, and continue to grow relationships with influential constituents (Gednalske, 2022). For institutional success, the leadership of the college presidents will be required to portray their understanding of traversing financial health, fundraising, national competition, and fluid enrollment (Gednalske, 2022).

Characteristics and Experiences Impacting Fundraising for University Presidents

University presidents are aware of the importance of raising dollars for an institution, based on a study conducted by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (2019). The skills desired in prospective presidents included previous fundraising success, the ability to cultivate donors, and fundraising abilities (June, 2020). Asfour et al. (2021),

conducted a study to investigate the skills and competencies needed for candidates to be hired as a university president before the age of 40. This study was conducted by interviewing university presidents to learn from their experiences, skills, and competencies needed to obtain a university presidency at a young age. From the interviews conducted in this study, there were four themes that the interviewees identified and credited to their preparation as university presidents including, little to no mentoring at all, being in the right place at the right time with the right credentials, having the necessary education and experience matter for candidates seeking a college or a university president position, and having interpersonal skills and the ability to work with others. The study concluded “A successful university president needs to provide leadership, guidance, and have expertise in many different aspects of their campus and institutions” (Al-Asfour et al., 2021, p. 32).

Nehls (2007), completed a study that looked to better understand presidential transitions during capital campaigns from the perspective of the chief development officer (CDO) who maintained continuity. This study also reviewed the average length of a president’s tenure and the impact of capital campaigns and fundraising during that timeframe. It was found that the capital campaign average length is seven years. Nicoson (2010) and Nehls (2007), found that college presidents’ average tenure is decreasing. Similarly, Harris and Ellis (2017) found that a college president's tenure has been shortened to just 5.25 years in the president role at an institution. This shorter tenure does not allow for the needed continuity, relationship-building opportunities, or the time to build trust with essential constituents and stakeholders for the fulfillment of the vision of an institutional capital campaign (Gednalske, 2022). In the study conducted by Piccolo

(2020), the results found that donors, particularly large gift donors, specifically want to deal directly with the university president. These studies, along with the ACE (2017) study shared that college presidents' fundraising struggles are compiled with problems inherited from previous administrations making their tenure more challenging. When there are challenges left from previous administrations, it is important to have a university president who possesses the characteristics and experiences to cultivate donor relationships throughout their tenure (Gednalske, 2022). Incoming presidents must have the ability and willingness to listen and engage with internal and external stakeholders, allowing for advancement in the key performance indicators from the beginning of a presidency (Gednalske, 2022).

Vandenberg (2019) conducted a study on how small, private liberal arts institutions, especially university presidents, understand and manage donor influence. This study conducted interviews with presidents who were asked to reflect on their formal and informal beliefs, philosophies, or theories used when fundraising. The study indicated that there was limited scholarly literature providing the knowledge needed for current and aspiring presidents and a large majority shared they did not use formal theories yet used advice lessons learned throughout their careers. The Vandenberg (2019) study also related how donors shape institutional behaviors, priorities, and choices and how institutional leaders should attempt to build productive and mutually satisfying relationships with philanthropists who seek to exert significant influence. The study discovered that university presidents received direction and inspiration from their understanding of philanthropy based on their personal experiences, life lessons, and instincts versus any from conceptual frameworks or theories (Vandenberg, 2019). For

college presidents to be successful in fundraising, they need to be open to collaborative leadership, utilize developed skills, engage in formal training, observe a holistic approach, and have a mind for transformation (Allen, 2021).

A study by Gearhart et al. (2020) shared how university faculty perceive the role of the university presidency. The study also examined the diversity of university presidents' experiences before assuming the role, such as backgrounds from the private sector, public service, politics, military, or the higher education ranks, and their perception of how it impacts their ability to accomplish this role. Other findings of the Gearhart et al. (2020) study indicated that presidents from academic backgrounds have a better fundraising focus toward student and faculty needs, and presidents who come from the private sector are more focused on a business approach to financial needs. The Gearhart et al. (2020) study shared that the role of a college president has grown with the complexity of reasons for a president to be hired whether it is to increase fundraising, fix institutional issues or problems, build a program or platform, or possibly for political appeasement. Today's higher education institution resembles more of a private business model, which means that the historical academic focus, experiences, and characteristics of a president are no longer the only perspectives for success as a university president (Gearhart et al., 2020). The university president is the chief fundraiser and should use fundraising to teach, learn, and share how efforts can help fulfill the institutional mission or enhance campus life (Scott, 2021). Higher education institutions need to ensure that the president's role as a leader has clear expectations of the fundraising process and is identified as a priority in their role (Piccolo, 2020). To optimize the success of a fundraiser and university presidents, individuals should have a doctoral degree, senior

management experience, the ability to understand data and analytics, and a history of sound decision-making abilities (Martin, 2021).

Recent Trends in the University President's Role Related to Fundraising

Higher education institutions are impacted by many challenges, whether due to pandemics, resignations, or issues that have developed over time (National Association of College and University Business Officers [NACUBO], 2022). The ACE (2023) study showed that university presidents are older and holding the jobs longer than in recent history. While a predicted wave of retirement is expected within the decade, the preparation of the next generation is essential (ACE, 2023, Al-Asfour et al., 2021; Cooney & Borland, 2018).

As COVID-19, scrutiny, scandals, and a wave of retirements have impacted the university presidency role, the job has turned into a revolving door across the country (Whitford & Guzman, 2022). The ACE (2017) study identified five frustrations for college presidents during their tenure as never enough money, faculty resistance to change, and problems inherited by previous administrations being top issues from the 2012 and 2017 surveys. The financial focus has continued to be moving, while university presidents' measurement of success has evolved to being assessed by fundraising success (Selingo, et al., 2017). With all the frustrations, support, challenges, and expectations for institutions, the question of how institutions are funded remains at large (Falder, 2021). The ACE (2017) study asked college presidents their perspective on the future funding resources that will be available. College presidents reported that they expect that state and federal government will decrease their funding for higher education (41%), while tuition and fees, private gifts, grants, contracts, and endowment income will increase

exponentially (85%) (Ruch, 2021). This adjustment in financial support sources has emphasized the integral role of university presidents in growing the financial support needed for their institutions to stay open (Ruch, 2021).

With the decreased financial support from the state or federal government and the pressure to not raise costs to students, university president fundraising is a requirement. Baker (2022) examined the impact of venture philanthropy on higher education and shared that across the United States, state legislative funding is declining, which is forcing rapid adjustments to a variety of shortfalls in multiple revenue areas. Institutions across higher education are experiencing financial difficulty, even if they traditionally have not seen financial struggles (Baker, 2022). According to Vandenberg's (2019) study, those shortfalls and financial struggles then lead to increased pressure for alternative sources of funding, and college advancement offices and university presidents then face the brunt of performance requirements. Vandenberg shared that not only is there pressure to produce, but also urgency to deliver results quicker while having unpredictable endowment returns, declining government support, and increasing expenses. The study shared that the need for external support has become a qualification for incoming presidents to have at least a fundamental appreciation and understanding of the importance of fundraising. The Vandenberg (2019) study shared, "Gone are the days in which institutions could simply expect benefactors to metaphorically throw money in a bag over the fence at "dear old alma mater" merely because they were asked to do so" (p.176). Concluding that donors today expect that when they donate, they are engaged communicated with, and thought of as partners. The study reflected this has evolved from wanting to just receive thank-you notes, meet student scholarship recipients, or have their

names on a facility. Although those are still popular practices, donors want, need, or expect more. These expectations then fall on the university president and office of advancement at institutions. The study shared that these donor trends are only likely to continue as wealth is transferred to different generations and wealth growth continues to change adding a constant need for evaluation by university presidents (Vandenberg, 2019).

Decreased government financial support, pandemics, and donor expectations have created new challenges for how university presidents must fundraise for their institutions (Pisors, 2022). The social climate has added its challenges with university presidents, and fundraising (Jaschik & Lederman, 2021). McClure and Anderson (2020) shared that higher education institution challenges have seen an increased call for commitment and focus on social justice and recognizing historical systemic discrimination. The shift in social climate has required a review of institutional purpose and reflection of institutional history, especially when looking at who buildings are named after, standing campus statues, scholarship criteria, and endowed professorships, which impact fundraising strategies (McClure & Anderson, 2020). This social climate has impacted how universities are reaching their fundraising goals, who the donors are, and the purpose of fundraising, ultimately impacting how the university president fundraises (Ruch, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has been instrumental in influencing higher education (Schleicher, 2020). The pandemic created an unprecedented crisis that university presidents have not seen in recent decades (Schofield, 2022). Friga (2020, p.1) referred to the COVID-19 situation as “the greatest crisis ever facing higher education” (p.1). Friga's (2020) study results shared that 70% of presidents expected a reduction in revenue, based

on declining enrollment and retention. Applying the concern and pressure to university presidents about how their institution will weather the financial impact of COVID-19, (Turk et al., 2020). Jaschik and Lederman (2021) shared that 91% of presidents in their study indicated they must grow their donor base. To increase the donor base, Scott (2021) shared that fundraising initiatives should involve multiple individuals, but the university president must be integral.

While the impact of COVID-19 has started to unfold, the longevity and depth of the financial impact remain uncertain for the current administration (Turk et al., 2020). Based on the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2021), by late March 2021, undergraduate enrollment had declined 5.9% compared to a year earlier when the pandemic was beginning to impact higher education. The Inside Higher Ed Survey of College and University Presidents indicated that an expectation of reducing expenses is not likely, while college presidents must look more favorably at increasing revenue (Jaschik & Lederman, 2021).

Turk et al. (2020) conducted a study titled, *College and University Presidents Respond to COVID-19*. The study surveyed college presidents to better understand how college presidents and institutions responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey captured how college presidents responded to the challenges presented by COVID-19, as well as to better understand both the immediate and long-term effects of the pandemic on higher education. The nearly 300 college presidents surveyed identified their most pressing concerns, reported on their fall reopening plans, and offered an assessment of the impact the pandemic has had on their institution's fall 2020 enrollment and financial health. The Turk et al. (2020) study shared that the most pressing issues facing Presidents

due to COVID-19 included student, faculty, and staff mental health, long-term financial viability, enrollment, and fundraising. The study reported from college presidents that most presidents (92 percent) reported increases in technology expenses, followed by increases in cleaning and maintenance (90 percent), student financial aid (75 percent), student support services (66 percent), and instruction (58 percent). Overall, very few institutions reported decreases in expenses. The survey also shared that nearly all college presidents (93 percent) reported a decrease in revenue from special programs. Most presidents also reported a decrease in revenue from auxiliaries (73 percent), room and board (61 percent), and endowment earnings and/or gifts (54 percent). Nearly half of presidents reported that tuition revenue (46 percent) and revenue from fees (47 percent) remained about the same as during the 2019–20 academic year. While college presidents looked to navigate filling the gap, their immediate actions or academic year actions included hiring freezes, freezes on compensation or salary increases, along with furloughing or laying off employees, and renegotiating contracts with outsourced services. The COVID-19 pandemic created financial gaps for university presidents needing to fundraise areas to improve how to support and maintain the current workforce, evolving student needs, secure and modern tech infrastructure, uncertain economic climate, and resource restraints (NACUBO, 2022; Turk et al., 2020). Research indicates that the job of fundraising has continued to be a focus for university presidents and with new challenges facing universities, their role and how they fundraise will continue to change (NACUBO, 2022; Turk et al., 2020).

Fundraising Resources and Training Opportunities for University Presidents

Historically, college and university presidential candidates have risen through the academic ranks to attain their presidencies (Martin, 2021). Data from the Piccolo (2020) study confirmed “the traditional academic path to the presidency remains the most common route, and many ascending through that path, do not have significant exposure to fundraising opportunities” (p.105). According to Kelderman (2022), from a report in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “107 presidents announced their resignations in 2021. That’s far more than the roughly 80 presidents who announced their resignations in 2020 but fewer than the 123 announcements in 2019” (para. 17). Based on the ACE study of college presidents in 2023 only 54% of current presidents have a career path in faculty or academic field, while 26% came from student affairs, auxiliary services, or fiscal services. That same study shared that 9% of presidents came from outside higher education (ACE, 2023). Researchers have shown that individuals are taking different paths to the presidency, while few are taking a path through fundraising (Clark, 2017). Piccolo (2020) concluded that although there is a growing need to secure private funding, institutions should seek college presidents who demonstrate advanced skills and a successful fundraising record in their careers. Simultaneously, the study shares that there are still presidents who do not know how to be involved with the fundraising process.

Since college president candidates are not coming into their roles with a fundraising background, mentorship and resources are essential for building the needed skills (Clark, 2017). The study by Selingo et al. (2017) noted that approximately two-thirds of presidents reported being groomed by mentors or coaches to prepare for their presidency role. Similarly, the study also shared that only a third indicated that they have

continued mentoring and coaching during their presidency. Another study by Al-Asfour et al. (2021), shared that participants received no mentorship and most of their growth from learning about their roles and pulling from their past experiences. The study also reported that there is a need for greater emphasis on training a new generation of faculty and staff to prepare for stronger developed and prepared higher education administrators, especially college presidents (Al-Asfour et al., 2021). Clark (2017), surveyed gauging university president's preparedness for their role, and fundraising/advancement was rated the most important, while feeling less prepared for the fundraising /advancement. While the same study shared, "fundraising, in particular, is essential from a president's first day in office...and only grows in importance over time in the position" (p.11). According to the ACE 2023 survey, presidents would like more training on fundraising, budget/financial management, and entrepreneurial ventures more than any other areas. Chheng and Clark (2018) indicated that, over the past decades of presidential surveys there has been an evident gap between the importance of fundraising for the president's role and the lack of training for it.

Additionally, there are professional organizations that focus on fundraising at the university administration level that university presidents can utilize. One of those organizations is the national association for college advancement, or CASE. On the CASE website, it states that,

CASE is the global nonprofit association dedicated to educational advancement professionals—in alumni relations, communications, development, marketing, and advancement services—who share the goal of championing education to transform lives and society.

CASE looks to fulfill its missions and to meet both individual and societal needs, colleges, universities, and independent schools rely on and therefore must foster the goodwill, active involvement, informed advocacy, and enduring support of alumni, donors, prospective students, parents, government officials, community leaders, corporate executives, foundation officers, and other external constituencies.

CASE helps its members build stronger relationships with all of these constituencies in several ways. (CASE, 2023)

There are also higher education institutions that offer fundraising training programs, such as the Lily Family School of Philanthropy at the University of Indiana. Through a customized course, school leaders will learn how to fundraise strategically, understand their unique roles, and learn their responsibilities as fundraisers (Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, 2024). The Harvard Seminar for New Presidents through the Harvard Graduate School of Education provides a practical orientation for a new president to learn about the opportunities, hazards, and responsibilities, and examine the components of the fundraising process (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2024).

The Martin (2020) study of *The Climb to the Top: Advice for Aspiring Black and African American College and University Presidents*, shared information on an institute held by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) called the Millennium Leadership Initiative (MLI). The institute involves higher education experts focused on building the skills of attendees with aspirations to be university leadership like university presidents. The institute is intentional in building skills and knowledge in

advancement, fundraising, governance, leadership building, financial management, and the executive search process. The first MLI institute was held in 1999 and within the first 21 years of the program, there have been over 570 professional graduates from the program, which has led to 104 graduates becoming college or university presidents. The other challenge is that the skill set of a university president has evolved from an academic leader to a business executive, making the above fundraising training even more valuable for new presidential candidates (Kelderman, 2022).

Summary

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the university president's role, how it has evolved, and the added emphasis on fundraising for this role. The literature review took an in-depth look at the university president's role from a historical overview of how the role has shifted from a faculty appointment to an institutional manager and funds generator. While the presidential role will continue to evolve, the role has grown to include a significantly larger amount of time spent on fundraising (Gednalske, 2022; Piccolo, 2020). The chapter also examined the characteristics and experiences needed in the university president's role, especially emphasizing the fundraising aspect. The research has shown that the evolution of the role has seen different career pathways, past experiences, and characteristics needed for success as an integral fundraising component (Al-Asfour et al., 2021; Gednalske, 2022; Martin, 2021; Vandenberg, 2019). Universities need to ensure that the president's role as a leader has clear expectations of the fundraising process and is identified as a priority in their role (Piccolo, 2020). A review of the various pathways to the presidency shared possible characteristics and experience to understand the mentorships, interpersonal skills, and collaborative efforts needed not

only to be a great university president but great fundraiser for their institution (Al-Asfour et al., 2021; Cooney & Borland, 2018). The university president's leadership, guidance, and expertise in multiple areas provide the framework for their success, especially in fundraising (Al-Asfour et al., 2021). The chapter also examined how a wave of retirement, COVID-19, economic downturn, lower enrollment, and social climate has impacted the role of the university president and how a president must fundraise (Baker, 2022; Ruch, 2021; Turk et al., 2020). Finally, the chapter reviewed the resources and training that university presidents deem as a necessity or opportunities to learn how to be a university president, especially a successful fundraiser. College presidents need to be open to collaborative leadership, utilize skills developed, and formal training, look at a holistic approach, and have a mind for transformation (Allen, 2021).

Chapter 3 explains the methodology used in the current study, including the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, and limitations.

Chapter 3

Methods

This qualitative study was designed to investigate the 4-year Midwest public university chief development officer's perceived role of the University Presidents' involvement in institutional fundraising. Chapter 3 provides a summary of the methods used in the study, including a description of the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis and synthesis, reliability and trustworthiness, researcher's role, and limitations.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design. Sutton and Austin (2015) indicate that qualitative studies “seek to convey why people have thoughts and feelings that might affect the way they behave” (p. 226). Qualitative research makes no attempt to generalize the findings to a wider population but may provide the basis for a future study or may assist in mapping out survey instruments for use in a quantitative study (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

This qualitative phenomenological research study examined the 4-year public universities chief development officer's perspective of how fundraising priorities evolved in the university president's role, and what characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success regarding their role in fundraising. Neubauer et al. (2019), noted that the phenomenological research design goal is to “describe the meaning of this experience—both in terms of what was experienced and how it was experienced” (p. 91) Based on Creswell and Creswell (2018) article, phenomenological

design is the most appropriate design for this study as it leads to understanding, based on experience, from the stories of chief development officers' perceptions.

Setting

The setting for the current study included a total of 24 four-year public universities in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. All six states are considered Midwestern states by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.), and they are also members of the Midwest Higher Education Compact, which is a "legislatively created agreement among states that work together to further higher education within the region" (Midwestern Higher Education Compact, 2023, para. 1). Also, these six states are members of the CASE District VI, which is a professional association that provides networking, recognition, and continuing education for university advancement professionals (CASE, 2023).

Sampling Procedures

The population of the study are chief development officers at 4-year public universities in the Midwest. The criterion sampling method was used to select participants from the population. According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), criterion sampling occurs when participants' characteristics meet the specified criteria. The first criterion for the study required participants to be the current chief development officer of a public 4-year university's foundation from the states of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. A second criterion required that the participants had at least five years' experience working as a chief development officer of a university foundation. The sample size was nine chief development officers who were selected with the criterion sampling method out of 24 individuals.

Instruments

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed for this current study. A semi-structured interview involves a set of open-ended questions that allow for spontaneous and in-depth responses (Ryan et al., 2009).

The interview protocol for this study was designed to allow the participants to share their experiences and viewpoints on university presidents' involvement with fundraising regarding priorities, characteristics, and experiences necessary for university presidents to achieve success in fundraising. The open-ended questions were constructed based on the purpose of the study, a review of literature, and guidance from a subject matter expert through multiple revisions aligning with the main research questions. During the drafting of the interview protocol, the researcher asked two external peer examiners to review the interview questions for clarity and alignment with the research questions. Once the interview protocol was close to final development, the researcher sent the two external peer examiners the draft protocol. The external peer examiners' suggestions focused on rewording questions and clarification of verbiage using general terms. Both external examiners were familiar with qualitative research, the university president's role, and higher education fundraising. In addition, two pilot tests were conducted to assess the interview protocol and improve interview questions, format, and instructions with the interview protocol. The pilot test participants suggested asking for the top three examples for each question asked and specifying professional training examples when asking about examples of training. Based on the pilot test suggestions, questions 9, 10, 11, and 12 were adjusted to reflect feedback. The interview protocol included eight demographic questions, followed by one semi-structured question

answering RQ1, fundraising priorities impacting the university president's role, then three semi-structured questions answering RQ2, characteristics, and experiences for university presidents' fundraising success, and finally one semi-structured reflection question.

Demographic and semi-structured interviewed questions can be found in Appendix D.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher submitted a request to conduct the study through the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB) on August 18, 2023. The researcher was approved to conduct research by the Baker University IRB committee on August 31, 2023 (see Appendix A).

All participants' contact information was found by researching each university's foundation website. Invitations were sent to participants' foundation emails. The invitation email included a brief overview of the study, including the purpose of the study, the main topics of interview questions, the amount of time the interview would require, the voluntary nature of the participation, the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' identity, and a request to contact for participation (see Appendix B). The invitation also included the consent form to sign if they chose to participate (see Appendix C). Once the invitation was accepted, the request to contact for participation and consent form were signed and returned to the researcher, the researcher contacted each participant by email to set up a date and time for an individual interview.

Interview sessions were scheduled for 45 minutes and at a time of day convenient for participants. The interview sessions were conducted through the Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform. The interview began with the researcher indicating that participants could withdraw from the study at any time and choose to not respond to any

of the interview questions. Participants were informed that an anonymous code (e.g. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) would be assigned to their interview transcript and recording and used when reporting the results of the data analysis to preserve anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were informed that after completion of the interview, a transcript would be provided to them to review for accuracy.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) advised qualitative researchers to establish conversational partnerships with participants built on "trust, understanding, and mutual respect" (p. 92). To begin the interview, the researcher built rapport with each participant through a conversation regarding the status of the year and the participant's recent events. Next, semi-structured interview questions were asked of each of the participants. As needed, follow-up questions and probes were used to solicit additional details to understand the participant's response fully to each question. During the interview, the interview protocol was followed consistently, and the researcher took notes to indicate verbal and nonverbal responses.

The researcher recorded each interview through the Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform and utilized the live transcription feature, which promoted accuracy in the preparation of interview transcriptions and allowed the researcher to focus on the responses, body language, tone of voice, and engagement of the participant throughout the interview. The identity of each individual was protected by assigning a non-identifying code (e.g. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.) to each interview transcription. The same non-identifying code was also used on each interview transcript as well as data reported to convey the results of the study. All interview recordings and

transcriptions were saved on a jump drive accessible only to the researcher and kept in a locked drawer. The files will be deleted five years after the completion of the study.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Creswell and Creswell (2018) presented five steps for analyzing qualitative data. The first step is to organize and prepare the data for analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In the current study, upon completion of the interviews, the researcher reviewed the transcripts created by live transcription on the Microsoft Teams video platform to correct any errors. Next, the researcher emailed the completed transcripts to corresponding participants asking them to review and correct for accuracy, errors, and omissions. After each participant's transcript was returned, any requested changes were made to the final draft of the transcript. To implement Creswell and Creswell's (2018) second step, referring to reading and looking at all the data, the researcher read each transcript, multiple times, to gather an overall impression of the responses to the questions. Next, the researcher followed Creswell and Creswell's (2018) third step of coding the data. To implement this step, final transcripts were entered into Quirkos to assist with the coding of the transcripts. The researcher categorized and sorted the data by comparing all interviews looking for frequently used words and phrases while observing reoccurring words and phrases. The researcher used Quirkos to note common or significant differences in responses. The fourth step consisted of common words and phrases being coded and developed into categories and themes generated by reviewing codes across interview questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Step five was representing the descriptions and themes according to Creswell and Creswell (2018), which led to a sentence, or several sentences being developed to represent each theme.

Reliability and Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is a tool involving the study and collection of the human experience by researchers to understand and describe the meaning of individual life (Bashir et al., 2008). Validity in qualitative research means the extent to which the data is plausible, credible, and trustworthy; and thus, can be defended when challenged (Bashir et al., 2008). Member checking was used to confirm the accuracy of the transcripts by allowing the research participants to review their interview transcription (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, peer debriefing was conducted to provide insight and suggestions about the data analysis and the results. The two external examiners who reviewed the interview protocol also reviewed the data analysis and theme identification, which helped to establish the credibility of the research. Both external examiners were familiar with qualitative research, have their doctoral degrees, and are familiar with the university president's role and the higher education fundraising landscape.

Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is to collect data from participants, and by doing so in the primary role, the identification of the researchers' personal values, assumptions, and biases must be shared (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher for this study conducted individual semi-interviews. The researcher had never worked at any of the foundation departments at institutions that the participants in this study were chosen from. The researcher took time to understand the complexities of each institution and their current environment as described by the research participants. To minimize bias in the study, the researcher continually practiced body language awareness, intentionality, and integrity by maintaining objectivity through interviews,

analysis, and findings. The researcher established objectivity by following the interview protocol consistently, only asking clarification follow-up questions, and having external reviewers review data analysis and theme identification.

Limitations

Limitations of this study included the following:

1. This study was conducted at 4-year universities in six states in the Midwest; therefore, the generalization of the findings is limited due to the sample size, type of institution, and geographical location. Regional universities, comprehensive universities, community colleges, and technical colleges differ regarding state funding and mission.
2. Data in the current study relied upon interview participants' perceptions of the university president's responsibilities. The accuracy of data provided to the researcher was dependent on the participants' truthfulness in articulating a response.

Summary

This chapter focused on the use of a qualitative research design that engaged participants in online semi-structured video interviews. An interview protocol was used to interview and learn more about the chief development officer's perceived role of the University President's involvement in institutional fundraising. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to gain information about university presidents' role in fundraising from a chief development officers' perspective at 4-year public Midwest universities. A total of eight participants participated in the study, who were classified as chief development officers who worked at 4-year public Midwest universities and were in their role for at least five years. Chapter 4 includes a summary of the characteristics of the participants and the results of the data analysis.

Participants

One female and seven male chief development officers participated in the study. Over half (57%) of the participants were in the age group of 41-50. The majority of the participants had between 20-30 years of experience in higher education, and between 6-16 years of experience as chief development officers in higher education. All participants had higher education degrees. More specifically, four participants had a bachelor's degree, two participants had a master's degree, and two participants had a doctorate or professional degree. This study used aliases for the participants to report the study's findings.

Adam is a 41–50-year-old white male Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with a bachelor's degree. He has worked in higher education for eight years, has been a chief development officer (CDO) in higher education for six years, and has been in his current role for six years.

Barry is a 61–70-year-old white male Vice-President of University Advancement and Executive Director with a master's degree. He has worked in higher education for 38

years, has been a CDO in higher education for 16 years, and has been in his current role for 16 years.

Chris is a 51–60-year-old Native American/American Indian male Executive Vice President with a doctorate. He has worked in higher education for 28 years, has been a CDO in higher education for 20 years, and has been in his current role for eight years.

Doug is a 51–60-year-old white male President and CEO with a bachelor's degree. He has worked in higher education for 21 years, has been a CDO in higher education for 15 years, and has been in his current role for eight years.

Francis is a 61–70-year-old white female President and CEO with a doctorate. She has worked in higher education for 47 years, has been a CDO in higher education for 37 years, and has been in her current role for 32 years.

Gary is a 41–50-year-old white male Vice President with a bachelor's degree. He has worked in higher education for 24 years, has been a CDO in higher education for nine years, and has been in his current role for nine years.

Henry is a 41–50-year-old white male Vice President with a master's degree. He has worked in higher education for 20 years, has been a CDO in higher education for six years, and has been in his current role for six years.

Ian is a 41–50-year-old white male President/CEO with a bachelor's degree. He has worked in higher education for 11 years, has been a CDO in higher education for seven years, and has been in his current role for seven years.

Findings

Three major themes emerged from the analysis of the data: Theme 1: fundraising priorities that impact the university president's role; Theme 2: characteristics necessary to

achieve fundraising success; Theme 3: experiences necessary to achieve fundraising success.

Table 1 provides an overview of each theme, the categories within the theme, and the number of participants who mentioned the subtheme during the interviews.

Table 1

Research Questions and Emergent Theme, Categories

Themes	N
<i>RQ1. How have fundraising priorities impacted the university president's role in fundraising over the past five years from the perspective of 4-year public university chief development officers?</i>	
Theme 1: Fundraising Priorities that Impact University Presidents' Role	
Category 1A. New Buildings and Renovations	6
Category 1B. Student Scholarships	7
Category 1C. Leadership Change	5
<i>RQ2. What characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success in the fundraising role from the perspective of 4-year public university chief development officers?</i>	
Theme 2: Characteristics Necessary to Achieve Fundraising Success	
Category 2A. Attentive	4
Category 2B. Personable	6
Category 2C. Visionary	5
Theme 3: Experiences Necessary to Achieve Fundraising Success	
Category 3A. Relevant Past Job Roles	5
Category 3B. Professional Association Involvement	4
Category 3C. Teamwork	5

Note. N= the number of participants that indicated a specific category during their interview. The total sample included 8 participants.

Fundraising Priorities that Impact University Presidents' Role

Every participant shared their institution's fundraising priorities that had an impact on the University President's role, along with how priorities had changed over the past five years. Participants varied on the specifics of their fundraising priorities. The most common fundraising priorities that had an impact on the university president's role

were fundraising for new and renovations of campus buildings, student scholarships, and leadership priorities.

Category 1A: New Building and Renovations. Six participants shared in their answers that the construction of new buildings and renovations of current buildings were priorities that had an impact on the university president's role in fundraising. Construction of new buildings and renovations of current buildings have impacted the university president's role since the initiatives are one of the most asked-about and visible priorities when speaking with donors. Barry shared, "What gets a person (donor) going and capital (donations) growing (is new construction and renovation) because you can see it. People comment on buildings and facilities, so they do matter. So that one (new building/renovation initiatives) is probably more critical, and more asked about than other areas."

A university president has a huge responsibility to choose which renovation or new building project will be promoted to donors. Ian spoke about the university president's responsibility to decide on starting a multi-million dollar fundraising campaign, but also a decision as to what new buildings or renovations could make the most impact with current and future students, but also the broader donor base. Ian shared that updating their current library has been an easy priority for the university president to prioritize. Ian shared, "Every college, every dean of every college has projects that they would like to have as fundraising priorities. But it's easy for the president to, say, gosh, I love that for College X, but all your students, all your faculty, and staff will benefit from a state-of-the-art library more than an individual college project."

In addition, Henry spoke about how new buildings or renovations have an impact on the university president's role because they impact student enrollment, retention, and future investments. Henry shared, "The buildings are going to bring the students, the buildings are going to support programs that are going to keep faculty or bring in research dollars."

Category 1B: Student Scholarships. Seven participants shared that student scholarships were a fundraising priority that had an impact on the university president's role. Ensuring student scholarship needs remained a top priority required consistent communication from the university president to donors. This task emphasized the pivotal impact that student scholarships have on university presidents needing to stay informed about the needs and ensure they remained a primary focus for donors. Gary stated, "With respect to student support, it's a constant message about the affordability and access that we want to provide students. He (the university president) is highly supportive of that. He understands that it is the fiber of who we are."

Henry discussed the significance of scholarships and highlighted their priority to the university president's role. He emphasized that all university presidents should be aware of this importance similar to how their university president is conscious of the priority. Henry highlighted the essential role of students in the university ecosystem, stating that without them, the institution would not require infrastructure or faculty. He described the competitive landscape for attracting students and how it influences the president's perspective on the student scholarship priority. According to Henry, the president actively promotes the importance of scholarships, examining metrics and their relevance across all academic departments. Henry concluded that this commitment to

student scholarships is crucial for the university president, as students are integral to the university's purpose and mission.

Category 1C: Leadership Change. Five participants shared that having new university presidents had led to new fundraising priorities, which has an impact on the university presidents' role in fundraising. When a new university president is hired it leads to a revised university agenda based on the university president's focuses, which impacts the past priorities and fundraising initiatives. Chris described their experience following the arrival of a new president, stating,

We got a new president in 2020. Very quickly, the conversation between the two of us turned into a fundraising campaign. We had not had a campaign here in 19 years. I've only been here eight (years), but for the two previous presidents, that was not a priority. That was absolutely a priority for this president. We did a feasibility study almost right out of the gate. Identified priorities, got the foundation board engaged, and began raising money about 15 months ago. Yes, the vision and the priorities have changed dramatically in the last three years.

When a new university president is hired, the fundraising priorities change. Adam, Barry, and Ian experienced a new president within the past five years. They spoke about how the adjustment to priorities from past to present impacts how donor dollars are fundraised and which donors are engaged with the new fundraising priorities, and this further changes the university presidents' role in fundraising. How that new involvement looks for a president is based on the needs of the foundation and where they think that president can add value with donors. Adam shared their experience when including their university president with donors, stating,

Identifying where the president either fits or doesn't fit. Having gotten to know our previous president over the course of eight years, I pretty much knew the good people (donors) to put him in front of and who some of the people that I definitely don't want to... Managing where that role of the president is necessary to be involved and where maybe it's better not and having a president who understands that too.”

Overall, participants shared the importance of aligning the university president's involvement in donor relations with the university's fundraising goals and the significance of having a university president who understands the nuances of donor management. This strategic approach can enhance fundraising effectiveness and contribute to the overall success of the institution's advancement efforts.

Characteristics Necessary to Achieve Fundraising Success

All participants shared characteristics necessary for university presidents to possess for them to achieve fundraising success, and three common characteristics emerged. The three common characteristics expressed were being attentive, personable, and visionary.

Category 2A: Attentive. Four participants shared in their answers that being attentive was an essential characteristic for a president to possess to achieve fundraising success. To be a university president you don't have to be an extrovert, but you need to be someone that will listen to constituents (donors). Francis expressed the importance of the attentive listener characteristic, “So a lot of times people think that somebody good at fundraising needs to be an extrovert and they don't, the most important aspect of the

quality of a president is to be a good listener, to be attentive in the time with the donors and be willing to allow time for those (donor) visits.”

The participants also shared that being attentive is about committing to absorbing the information being shared in conversations and making a connection to the goals of the university. Adam shared, “The focus from a fundraising standpoint, is listening to our donors and trying to extract what is most important and valuable to them and how that fits into the strategic plan of the school. So that being able to listen and make that relationship between what they're saying and what we need to accomplish as a school and trying to make those connections an important skill.”

Category 2B: Personable. For six participants, being personable was a characteristic that was very important to have success as a fundraiser for the university president. Participants explained that being personable is someone sincere, genuine, authentic, involved, and approachable. Barry stated, “I think the biggest one (characteristic) is they must be personable and approachable... They must have that welcoming personality that they're just comfortable with people. I mean, that's hard to teach those things. You got to be genuine.”

Being personable is a characteristic that helps earn donors' trust, which helps them want to give. A university president should have the personable characteristics to be successful in fundraising. Doug shared that “we (foundation) have to earn that (donation) and you earn that through, again, the qualities that you bring. So, I think certainly a leader (university presidents) ought to be somebody of integrity who's sincere, genuine, authentic and expresses a lot of gratitude and demonstrates the ability to be grateful for others and the partnership.”

Category 2C: Visionary. For five participants, having a vision as a leader was a characteristic that they felt was important for a university to have success in fundraising. When a university president has a vision for the institution, it creates an opportunity for a donor to create an impact with their donation. Participants spoke about how a university president will be successful in fundraising if they have a vision for the university and can articulate that vision to donors. Chris shared the importance of vision, stating,

Well, the first word that comes to mind is vision. The president must have a vision for the future of the institution. Then you can determine what fundraising priorities facilitate that vision. If you just want to raise money without a desired outcome, you can do that. It's hard to compel a donor to write a check if they don't understand the impact their (donors) giving will have on something tangible. So having a vision for the campus, being able to articulate that vision compellingly is important.

The quote emphasized that successful fundraising is not simply about raising money but rather about leveraging resources to realize a shared vision for the institution's future. The university president's role as a visionary leader who can articulate a compelling narrative and mobilize support towards common goals, ultimately driving the institution forward.

A visionary university president also needs to have a consistent vision, showing that donors are helping build towards something and successful fundraising. Gary shared, "I think it's consistency too and building that consistency through vision. I think that's an attribute that our university president features, that this is all part of a big plan. He's seen what we're building towards and he doesn't change the conversation all the time."

Experiences Necessary to Achieve Fundraising Success

All participants discussed experiences necessary to achieve fundraising success for a university president. The most common experiences focused on past relevant job roles, professional association involvement, and teamwork.

Category 3A: Past Relevant Job Roles. Five participants listed past relevant job roles as important experiences for a university president to be successful in fundraising. Having professional experience with fundraising being the scope of their formal duties of responsibilities and expectations was shared by multiple participants to be essential for a university president to have. Doug expressed the importance of previous experience of being in roles doing fundraising, sharing,

I would say first and foremost, the more that they've been in the fold, been engaged in doing this work (fundraising) at every level, whether it's starting as an individual faculty member or eventually as a department head or a dean or as an academic leader. In any sense, the more you can get the experience of going on the road engaging in these conversations; going through the iterative process of building relationship, credibility, trust, making a case, and making an ask; the more you get comfortable. You get better at it, the more you do it.

Doug's quote highlighted the value of experiential learning and practice in enhancing comfort and proficiency in fundraising for university presidents, and suggestion to have continuous engagement in fundraising activities throughout their career.

Having past relevant experience in fundraising allows a president to be a stronger fundraiser and able to apply more within their role. Ian shared their experience with university presidents who have past relevant experience in fundraising, stating,

For our current university president, their fundraising experience came from early on in their career. They were the president and CEO of the nationwide philanthropy for a sorority. So, they had that philanthropic experience of working with the board asking for gifts. The first time they asked for a gift wasn't as a university president. That made them a stronger fundraiser and learning how to mix it in with everything else in their job.

Ian's quote highlighted the view that proficiency in fundraising and early exposure to philanthropic activities can serve as a strong foundation for success in fundraising roles. The university president's journey should include diverse experiences and continuous learning in shaping effective fundraising skills.

Category 3B: Professional Associations Involvement. Four participants shared that engagement or involvement with professional associations was essential to fundraising success for university presidents. All participants had a variety of associations that they shared their university presidents follow but the CASE, Association of Governing Board (AGB), and Educational Advisory Boards (EAB) were the foundational essential associations shared by all four of them. Doug spoke about the professional associations and their benefits, stating,

They are highly credible professional associations in our field. Again, they do their very best to elevate the professions, continue growth, progress, advocate for the profession, support high-impact practice, and how we do this work. So, I believe strongly in them as a resource and how it reinforces for an academic president that this (fundraising) is not just a simple task that you could just hire anybody to do.

The professional associations provide constant articles that pertain to fundraising, on-demand webinars for leisure training, and opportunities to learn and collaborate with others. These resources and interactions provide the university president with the information to keep fundraising at the front of their minds and up-to-date tools to be successful in fundraising. Ian shared about involvement and engagement with professional associations for university presidents, stating,

Fundraising professional associations keep the (fundraising) conversation always on their lips, in their mind. Webinars that they can watch at their leisure training, and they can provide to other people on their teams. They (professional associations) also provide conferences where you're encouraged to be present, encouraged to take their subordinates, and go with their foundation board members, and foundation staff, whose foundation board members are almost always your top donors. So, it (professional associations) just provides everything, it provides written education, oral education, conference education, and the practicality of working with the people you need to be having those conversations with.

By being involved in these professional associations, university presidents can stay informed about fundraising trends, develop their skills, and build connections with potential donors. This ultimately strengthens the university's fundraising efforts and the university president's success in fundraising.

Category 3C: Teamwork. Five participants shared that having experience working with others through cooperative work to accomplish a task was important for fundraising success as a university president. During the interviews, participants spoke

about the amazing teams of fundraising professionals that university presidents must collaborate with. Experience in teamwork, especially with university foundation staff, can look like their willingness to learn, delegation, or utilizing the expertise of staff to reach group success. Adam shared his view that many university presidents haven't been university presidents before, and that is okay, stating,

I don't think many have and university presidents need to have experience to be successful at it (fundraising) moving forward. You know, as long as you surround yourself with people who can, who you trust, and you're willing to learn from them. If you've never done it, never been in that role, trust the people around you to help, put you in the right positions, and embrace feedback.

If university presidents have shown their willingness to learn, surrounded themselves with great people, and been comfortable with being vulnerable in past experiences can lead to success in fundraising for university presidents.

For a university president to be successful in fundraising they must surround themselves with great people, and then utilize those great people. They utilize those people by delegating tasks and responsibilities so that more can be accomplished. University presidents can have more success in fundraising if they utilize a team, rather than rely upon themselves. Henry shared their views on collaboration and delegation experiences for university presidents, stating,

As a president, I really believe you should know how to delegate. If you don't, you better learn how to delegate because you can't do it all. Sometimes egos might get in the way, and they (university presidents) want to feel they can do it all or they're the only ones that can do it. Delegate and surround yourself with

great people. Find out who's really willing to kind of pull in the same direction you want to go, and support them, build on them.

By surrounding themselves with talented individuals who share the university's vision, university presidents can empower collaboration and achieve more effective outcomes.

Summary

This study focused on the university president's role in fundraising from the perspective of the chief development officers. This chapter included a summary of the findings of the interviews conducted with eight chief development officers' perspectives at 4-year public Midwest universities.

Regarding how fundraising priorities have had an impact on the role of university presidents, three themes emerged. Participants shared the significance of new construction and renovations in fundraising, emphasizing their visibility and influence on donor engagement. Student scholarships emerged as a constant message, emphasizing the importance of fundraising success to continue to offer affordable education and access for students. In addition, the hires of new university presidents led to shifts in fundraising priorities, which further affected the university president's role in engaging with donors.

Additionally, regarding characteristics essential for university presidents to achieve fundraising success, three themes emerged. More specifically, being attentive involves active listening and connecting with the university's goals; being personable includes sincerity, authenticity, and approachability; and being visionary is also crucial, which means a consistent vision contributing to successful fundraising efforts. Lastly, regarding experiences necessary for fundraising success, three themes emerged. Past fundraising experience was deemed crucial for a university president's success, providing

insights into relationship-building, and making effective asks. Involvement with professional associations, particularly CASE, AGB, and EAB, was highlighted for continuous learning and staying updated on fundraising practices. Teamwork was emphasized, stressing the importance of university presidents surrounding themselves with a capable team, delegating tasks, and embracing feedback for successful fundraising. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study, findings related to the literature, and conclusions.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

The current study investigated the university president's role in university fundraising from the perspective of the chief development officer at 4-year Public Midwest institutions. The study focused on how fundraising priorities affected the university president's role in fundraising and what characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success in their fundraising role. Chapter 5 is organized into three major sections. The first section provides a study summary that includes an overview of the research problem, purpose statement and research questions, methodology, and major findings. The second section describes how findings in the current study relate to the literature. The final section states conclusions that include implications for action, recommendations for future research, and closing remarks.

Study Summary

This study explored the university president's role in university fundraising from the perspective of the chief development officer. The study also explored how fundraising priorities have impacted the university president's role in fundraising, while additionally, collecting information about characteristics and experiences necessary for a university president to be successful in fundraising. This section summarizes the study, including an overview of the problem. The purpose statement and research questions utilized in the study are identified. This section concludes with a review of the methodology and the major findings.

Overview of the Problem

In recent times, the university president has focused on providing more with less, navigating the political arena, and being evaluated by the financial success of the institution (Apthorp, 2012; Bornstein, 2009; Falconi & Teece, 2018). Yet, University presidents are less prepared or trained in fundraising throughout their careers (Al-Asfour et al., 2021; Goddard, 2009; McGee, 2003). According to the ACE (2017, 2023), with more university presidents being less prepared and trained for the fundraising aspect of the position, the degree of growth for an institution will be in question. Researchers have expressed a need for presidents to understand how their institution's foundation leadership would like to see presidents involved in institutional fundraising (King & Gomez, 2008; Pisors, 2022). Although there is a need for presidents to understand from their advancement teams how they should be involved, the research has focused on institutional fundraising from the perspective of the university president (Goddard, 2009; Myers, 2016; Shields, 2021; Stafford, 2017), community college presidency (Abernathy, 2014; Besikof, 2010), single institutions rather than on a general application (Schanz, 2012), and concentration on general fundraising in higher education (Caboni & Proper, 2007; G. Gearhart & Miller, 2018; Martin, 2021; Ruch, 2021; Shields, 2021). Further research is needed to provide information to assist university presidents with fundraising, so they can be more effective fundraising leaders.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how institutional fundraising priorities have impacted the university presidents' roles and responsibilities, and what characteristics and experiences as needed to be successful with fundraising from the

perspective of the chief development officer. Two research questions guided this study. The first research question examined how institutional fundraising priorities impacted the university president's role in fundraising over the past five years. The second research question analyzed what characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success in the fundraising role.

Review of the Methodology

A qualitative phenomenological research design was used in the current study. Eight study participants interpreted and reported their own lived experiences to the researcher, allowing rich, detailed first-person descriptions of the perceptions of eight chief development officers at 4-year public universities in the Midwest. A semi-structured interview protocol was conducted via Teams videoconferencing software. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The researcher verified the accuracy of transcriptions with each participant. Creswell and Creswell's (2018) five steps were implemented to analyze the data. Participants were asked to review the transcription for accuracy, and coding was applied to each transcript to identify frequently used words and phrases for all interview questions. Three specific themes were identified to explain the data: fundraising priorities that impact university presidents' role; characteristics necessary to achieve fundraising success; and experiences necessary to achieve fundraising success. Nine categories were identified to further explain each specific theme: new buildings and renovations; student scholarships; leadership change; attentive; personable; visionary; relevant past job roles; professional association involvement; and teamwork.

Major Findings

Participants offered varied responses from the chief development officer's perspective on the university president's role in university fundraising. Data analysis identified three themes: fundraising priorities that impact university presidents' roles, characteristics necessary to achieve fundraising success, and experiences necessary to achieve fundraising success. In addition, nine categories related to the three themes also emerged.

Regarding Theme 1, all respondents varied on the specifics of their fundraising priorities and how the priorities have impacted the university president's role, however for Theme 1, three common categories emerged. The first category shared by six participants mentioned the construction of new buildings and renovations of current buildings that have impacted the university president's role since these initiatives are one of the most asked about and visible priorities when speaking with donors. The second category shared by seven participants mentioned student scholarship fundraising as having impacted the university president's role due to the increasing financial needs of students. The third category shared by five participants was that having new university presidents had led to new fundraising priorities. When a new university president is hired it leads to an adjusted university agenda based on the university president's focuses, which impacts how donor dollars are fundraised, and which donors are engaged with the new fundraising priorities, leading to further impacting the university president's role in fundraising.

Regarding Theme 2, there were three common characteristics expressed within this theme. The first characteristic shared by four participants was that being attentive

was an essential characteristic for a university president to focus on listening to their constituents being more important than them being extroverts. The participants also shared that being attentive is about committing to digesting the information being shared in conversations and making a connection to the goals of the university. The second characteristic shared by six participants was being personable and was described by many as someone sincere, genuine, authentic, involved, and approachable. The third characteristic shared by five participants was that having a vision as a leader was important for a university president to be successful in fundraising. When a university president has a consistent vision for the university, and can consistently articulate that vision to donors, it can lead to fundraising success.

Regarding Theme 3, three common experiences emerged within the theme. The first experience shared by five participants listed past relevant job roles as important experiences and promoted the application of fundraising more into their university president's role. The second experience shared by four participants stated engagement or involvement with professional associations that was essential to fundraising success for university presidents. The common essential associations shared by the four participants were CASE, AGB, and EAB. These associations added value to the university president's role in fundraising by sharing a variety of training and educational resources for multiple learning needs. The third experience shared by five participants listed that having experience working with others through cooperative work to accomplish a task was important for fundraising success as a university president. Having experience working closely with other departments, collaboratively shows that university presidents have a

willingness to learn, delegate, or utilize the expertise of staff to reach group success, and can utilize a team, rather than rely upon themselves.

Based on the major findings of this study, fundraising priorities impact the university president's role as funding is needed for the modernization of campus, maintenance of current existing infrastructure, students' financial needs, and leadership agendas adjusting to the changing needs. Additionally, university presidents need to have the personal characteristics that allow them to build relationships, trust, and make enduring connections for fundraising success. Furthermore, past formal duties of responsibilities with fundraising, willingness to learn, and ability to collaborate are essential experiences for university presidents to have so they can be successful in their role in fundraising.

Findings Related to the Literature

Institutional expenses are not reducing, government financial support isn't increasing, and college presidents must find ways to increase revenue for institutional needs (Jaschik & Lederman, 2021). No matter the institutional size, type, or level, a constant priority for university presidents has been the need to fundraise (Clark, 2017). Eight chief development officers from 4-year public universities in the Midwest participating in the current study indicated the same sentiments as articulated above by Jaschik and Lederman when reflecting upon their experiences in higher education. State funding will continue to decrease, and revenue will need to continue to come from fundraising while emphasizing the need to work closely with college foundations, board members, and employees (Myers, 2016). All of the participants in the current study support the Myers study indicating the climate and priority for fundraising have increased

and how fundraising priorities have impacted the university presidents' role. Pisors (2022) study shared that university presidents' growth and success can be built through their academic experiences and human capital, rather than fundraising achievements. The current study supports the Pisors study through participants sharing how university presidents' characteristics and experiences are needed to be successful in fundraising so that revenue can be collected for the increased institutional needs.

Previous research suggests that most college presidents' institutions had an increase in technology expenses, cleaning and maintenance, student financial aid, student support services, and instruction, leading to further needs to find revenue through fundraising to cover the costs (ACE, 2017; Taylor et al. 2021). Findings from the first research question were in line with the literature found in ACE studies (2017; Taylor et al., 2021), which indicated that the fundraising priorities that impact the university president's role were based on the increased need to update current infrastructure, modernization, student financial support, and needs that could be addressed with fundraising campaigns. In addition, other studies support the first research question of needing university presidents to have an active role in fundraising, grow relationships with influential donors, and reach goals set by institutional boards (Gednalske, 2022; Nehls, 2007; Piccolo, 2020). The findings in the current study suggest that identifying fundraising priorities, getting the foundation board engaged, and knowing how the university president could add value to donors, especially through a leadership change were important and support existing literature (Gednalske, 2022; Nehls, 2007; Piccolo, 2020).

Gednalske (2022) concluded that incoming presidents must have the ability and willingness to listen and engage with donors. The current study findings support Gednalske's conclusion, based on all participants' responses to characteristics and experiences needed to be successful in fundraising. Participants in the study supported the willingness to listen by sharing the need to listen and be attentive by digesting the information being shared in conversations, while also having experience interacting and engaging with donors in previous roles. The current findings also support previous studies that indicate the importance of relationship-building with donors through having personable characteristics (Al-Asfour et al., 2021; June, 2020; Nehls, 2007; Scott, 2021).

According to Al-Asfour et al. (2021), university presidents need expertise in multiple areas, especially in fundraising. Findings in the current study support the Al-Asfour et al. study that experiences necessary to achieve fundraising success include having past relevant job roles with fundraising. The current findings also support the research that there is a need for training the current and new generation of higher education administrators on fundraising, budget/financial management, and entrepreneurial ventures (ACE, 2023; Allen, 2021; Asfour & Keleher, 2021; Chheng & Clark, 2018). For example, participants from the current study shared a variety of associations they believe their university presidents should utilize for training to be successful in fundraising. In addition, the current findings also suggested that experience in teamwork, delegation, or utilizing the expertise of staff to reach group success is essential, which was consistent with previous studies noting university presidents must work closely, utilize, and collaborate with college foundation teams, board members, and

employees so that all parties can fulfill the priorities of their respective entities (Myers, 2016; Phelan, 2005; Shields, 2021).

The findings of this study were in line with the existing literature, suggesting that university presidents need to play an active role in fundraising, develop their interpersonal characteristics with a relationship-building focus, and gain experience and knowledge in fundraising to be successful fundraisers as university presidents. The study's findings extend the limited existing literature related to the university president's responsibilities, experiences, and ideal characteristics needed to engage with institutionally related fundraising from the perspective of the institutionally related chief development officer.

Conclusions

This study examined the perceptions of the chief development officers at 4-year Public Midwest universities about the university president's role in university fundraising. The study focused on how fundraising priorities impacted the university president's role in fundraising and what characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success in their fundraising role. Eight participants responded to interview protocol questions. The sections that follow describe implications for action, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

Implications for Action

Participant responses to interview questions in the current study provided in-depth information about how fundraising priorities impacted the university president's role in fundraising over the past five years, and what characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success in their fundraising role. The

results of this study can provide valuable information for aspiring university presidents as they look to build their skills and experiences. Based on the findings of this study, the following future actions are suggested:

1. University presidents should communicate with their Chief Development Officer regularly to determine foundation and institutional alignment so that university presidents can add value to institutional fundraising efforts.
2. Current and aspiring university presidents need to learn about the university's top priorities that matter to donors so they can better understand donors' desires and work to enhance alignment with institutional priorities.
3. Current and aspiring university presidents could use the findings in the study to understand and develop the personal characteristics needed to be successful in fundraising.
4. Aspiring university presidents could use the findings in this study about relevant job experiences, professional associations, and managerial experiences to better prepare themselves for fundraising success in their presidency role.
5. Current and aspiring presidents could take advantage of professional development and professional associations' resources and interactions to keep fundraising at the front of their minds and up-to-date tools to be successful in fundraising.

Recommendations for Future Research

While the findings of the current study can provide valuable information for current university presidents, future university presidents, chief development officers, and other higher education leaders, additional research should be explored. The following

recommendations for future qualitative research are based on results from the current study.

1. This study included only eight participants who had been in their role for at least 5 years. Future research should involve an increased number of participants and increase or decrease the experience requirement for a participant to be in their current role.
2. The setting for the current study was limited to 4-year public universities located in the Midwest. In addition to including participants from states outside the Midwest or focusing on a specific state, future replications of the current study should be conducted in varied types of higher education institutions (e.g., research-intensive, community college, technical institutions, private, and for-profit).
3. Future research could emphasize a variety of demographic categories. The variety would provide a diverse variety of ages, genders, races, experiences, and degrees while offering a more comprehensive insight into responses.
4. The research and interview protocol questions in the current study were purposefully broad and provided a generalized picture of fundraising priorities that impact the university president's role, characteristics necessary to achieve fundraising success, and experiences necessary to achieve fundraising success. Future studies should explore each category with more specific and targeted questions regarding fundraising priorities that impact the university president's role, characteristics necessary to achieve fundraising success, or experiences necessary to achieve fundraising success.

Concluding Remarks

This study contributed to the limited research regarding the characteristics and experiences university presidents need to be successful fundraisers from the perspective of a foundation president. The results of this study, though limited in scope, can provide valuable information for aspiring university presidents, especially for individuals with minimal fundraising experience, about expectations from the chief development officer's perspective. The study further explored the impact fundraising has on the role of university presidents, along with identifying traits, characteristics, and experiences needed for a university president to achieve effective and efficient fundraising success. The presence or absence of successful fundraising can be the difference between institutional success and turmoil (Shaw & Shaw, 2013). Due to the increased need for fundraising, university presidents need to further their understanding of their institutional fundraising role (Pisors, 2022). Knox (2023) noted that donations to higher education institutions have become an important source of revenue and will continue to be the engine supporting innovations, leading to the need for fundraising success to create revenue. The results of this study suggest that understanding foundation priorities, having personable characteristics, having past relevant experience, willingness to learn, and collaboration between the university president and chief foundation officer are viable options to address the current and future needs for fundraising success.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Baker University IRB Approval



Baker University Institutional Review Board

August 31, 2023

Dear Josh Doak and Arminda McCallum,

The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Expedited Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.
6. If this project is not completed within a year, you must renew IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact me at skimball@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4563.

Sincerely,

Scott Kimball, PhD
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB Committee
Jiji Osiobe, PhD
Tim Buzzell, PhD
Susan Rogers, PhD

Appendix B. Invitation to Participate

Invitation to Participate

Hello! My name is Josh Doak and I am a doctoral candidate at Baker University in the Graduate School of Education. I am contacting you to invite you to participate in my dissertation research. For my dissertation, I am conducting a qualitative study on the perceptions of a university chief development officer on the university president's role in fundraising at 4-year public institutions in the Midwest. The study looks to examine how has fundraising priorities impacted the university president's role in fundraising over the past five years and what characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success in fundraising roles. As a chief development officer of a foundation at a 4-year public institution in the Midwest who has at least five years' experience working as a chief development officer of a university foundation, you are an individual who might be interested in participating in the study.

Your participation is voluntary and will include a 45-60-minute interview, through video conferencing (which will be audio recorded) to discuss your perceptions about how has fundraising priorities impacted the university president's role in fundraising over the past five years and what characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success in fundraising role. The interview questions are provided below. The researcher will be taking notes throughout the interview. Should you choose to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and cease participation at any point in the process. During the interview, you may choose to withdraw from the study or indicate that you prefer not to respond to any question. If you choose to participate, your interview will be assigned an anonymous code (e.g., Participant 1) to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. There are no risks or discomfort associated with this study. You will not receive any compensation or benefits for participation.

After the interview, I will email you a transcript of your interview. You will have an opportunity to review your transcript to provide any corrections. After the study is completed, you will be sent a summary of the findings and will have an opportunity to review the findings and share comments with the researcher.

Your participation will contribute to the research on this critical and understudied topic. If you would like to participate or have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me at 719-229-58547 or at JoshuaJDoak@stu.bakeru.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Josh Doak, ABD
joshuajdoak@stu.bakeru.edu
719-229-8547

Major Advisor:
Dr. Arminda McCallum
Arminda.McCallum@bakeru.edu

Interview Questions

1. What is your age group?
2. What gender are you?
3. What racial or ethnic group do you identify with? (Select all that apply)
4. How many years have you worked in higher education?
5. How many years have you worked as a chief development officer in higher education?
6. How many years have you been in your current role?
7. What is your current title?
8. What is your highest level of education completed?
9. What are the top 3 current fundraising priorities at your institution?
10. Based on your experience, to achieve success in fundraising role, what characteristics should a university president have? (Characteristics are the distinguishing features or qualities that make a person or a thing different from others. Some examples could be integrity or optimism.)
11. Based on your experience, to achieve success in fundraising role, what experiences should a university president have? (Experiences is time spent doing, learning something, or having first-hand knowledge. Some examples could be education, past jobs, or past educational development opportunities.)
12. Based on your experience, are belonging to professional associations necessary for university president to achieve success in fundraising role?"
13. Are there any other details regarding fundraising priorities or characteristic or experiences about university presidents in the fundraising role that you would like to share?

Appendix C. Consent Form

Please consider this information carefully before deciding whether to participate in this research.

_____ (Print Full Name) supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided so that you can decide whether you wish to consent to participate in the present study.

Purpose of the research:

This qualitative study is being conducted to understand the perceptions of a chief development officer about the university president's role in fundraising at 4-year public institutions in the Midwest who has at least five years of experience working as a chief development officer of a university foundation. The study looks to examine how has fundraising priorities impacted the university president's role in fundraising over the past five years and what characteristics and experiences are necessary for university presidents to achieve success in fundraising roles.

What you will do in this research: You will be asked to participate in one interview that will be recorded via video conferencing and transcribed.

Time required: The interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

Permission to Video Record: The video conferencing interview will be recorded to facilitate accuracy in creating a transcription of the interview. Your consent to participate in the interview also indicates consent to video-record the interview. The researcher will be taking notes throughout the interview.

Risks: No risks or discomfort are anticipated as a result of participating in the interviews.

Benefits: You will not receive any compensation or tangible benefits for participating in this research.

Confidentiality: Your responses to interview questions will be kept confidential. A nonidentifiable code (e.g., Participant 1) will be assigned to your recording and interview transcript to protect your anonymity. At no time will your identity be revealed. The recording will be destroyed upon completion of the transcription. Transcripts of interviews will be stored on a thumb drive accessible only to the researcher in a secure location and destroyed after five years.

Participation and withdrawal: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. You may withdraw by informing the researcher that you no longer wish to participate (no questions will be asked). You may choose to not answer any question.

Transcript Review: Once a transcript of your interview has been prepared, it will be sent to you for you to review for accuracy. To contact the researcher: Joshua Doak, (719) 229-8547; joshuajdoak@stu.bakeru.edu

Agreement: The nature and purpose of this research have been sufficiently explained and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without incurring any penalty. My signature below indicates agreement to participate in the study and to video-record the interview session. The researcher will be taking notes throughout the interview.

Signature of individual agreeing to participate in study

Date

I agree to be audio recorded: _____
Signature of participant

Appendix D. Interview Questions

The questions below were used during the interviews with presidents selected to participate in the study. The questions served as a guide for a semi-structured interview. The interview questions are categorized by each research question.

Demographic Questions – Questions will be asked through a poll survey at the beginning of the interview.

1. What is your age group?
 - a. Age 30 or less
 - b. Age 31-40
 - c. Age 41-50
 - d. Age 51-60
 - e. Age 61-70
 - f. Age 71 or more
2. What gender are you?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Non-binary
 - d. Other
 - e. Prefer not to answer
3. What racial or ethnic group do you identify with? (Select all that apply)
 - a. Black/African American
 - b. White
 - c. Hispanic or Latino
 - d. Asian
 - e. Native American/American Indian
 - f. Mixed or Other
4. How many years have you worked in higher education?
5. How many years have you worked as a chief development officer in higher education?
6. How many years have you been in your current role?
7. What is your current title?
8. What is your highest level of education completed?
 - a. Associate's degree
 - b. Bachelor's degree
 - c. Master's degree
 - d. Doctorate or Professional degree
 - e. Other

Fundraising Priorities impacting University President Role

9. What are the top 3 current fundraising priorities at your institution?
 - a. Follow up question. You just shared that the first priority is _____(the first priority shared), in your opinion, how does this

priority impact the president's role in fundraising at your institution?

- i. Then repeat follow up question for each priority shared.
- b. Follow up question. Have fundraising priorities changed over the past five years at your institution? If the participant answers yes, then ask "what those changes are?"
 - i. If the participant shared the changes, then ask "how did ____ (the first change shared) impact your president's role in fundraising?"
 - ii. Then repeat follow up question for each change shared.
 - iii. If the participant answers no, then ask the next interview question.

Characteristics and Experiences for University Presidents Fundraising Success

10. Based on your experience, to achieve success in fundraising role, what characteristics should a university president have? (Characteristics are the distinguishing features or qualities that make a person or a thing different from others. Some examples could be integrity or optimism.)
 - a. Follow up question. From the characteristics that you shared, what are the top 4 characteristics a university president should have to achieve success in fundraising.
 - i. Why are these characteristic necessary for the president to achieve success in fundraising role?
 1. If they don't provide an example ask, "Could you give me an example?"

11. Based on your experience, to achieve success in fundraising role, what experiences should a university president have? (Experiences is time spent doing, learning something, or having first-hand knowledge. Some examples could be education, past jobs, or past educational development opportunities.)
 - a. Follow up question. From the experiences that you shared, what are the top 4 experiences a university president should have to achieve success in fundraising.
 - i. Why are the experience necessary for the president to achieve success in fundraising role?
 1. If they don't provide an example ask, "Could you give me an example?"
 - b. Follow up question. If trainings aren't shared in the answer to question 11, then ask "Based on your experience, do you think

professional trainings are necessary for university president to achieve success in fundraising role?”

- i. If the participant answers yes, then ask what training(s) should a president have to achieve success in fundraising role?
- ii. If the participant answers no, then ask the next interview question.

12. Based on your experience, are belonging to professional associations necessary for university president to achieve success in fundraising role?”

- i. If participant answers yes, then ask the following two follow-up questions.
- ii. If the participant answers no, then ask the last reflection question.
 - a. Follow-up question. Which professional associations are most beneficial for a university president to achieve success in fundraising role.
 - b. Follow-up question. How do the professional associations you shared benefit university presidents to achieve success in fundraising role?

Reflection

13. Are there any other details regarding fundraising priorities or characteristic or experiences about university presidents in the fundraising role that you would like to share?