



Demain l'Université de Strasbourg A Report for EUA on Fundraising for the new University of Strasbourg

This Report

This report draws on three main elements :

- The background material and project information supplied through EUA and the three Universities of Strasbourg.
- A study visit to Strasbourg by the report's author on 25 June 2008, which included discussions with University leaders and supporters including the President of Université Louis Pasteur, M. Alain Beretz, together with members of the groupe de travail "Fondation Université de Strasbourg".
- Wide knowledge of fundraising practice and emerging trends, especially through the experience of the 3,500 institutions that are CASE members around the world. These range from those just embarking on a concerted fundraising effort (including a number in France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland); to those with a 10-15 year history (including a number of leading UK universities); to those with a 20-50 year trajectory of investing in "institutional advancement" (especially in the USA and Canada).

It became clear in the course of the discussions in Strasbourg that, given a very tight timetable before the official creation of the new University in January 2009, a number of key decisions affecting fundraising had in fact already been made by the University authorities. These include not only the commitment to the Fondation Partenariale, but also the identification of a member of staff to take particular responsibility for fundraising and the engagement of the fundraising consultancy, Philanthropia, previously commissioned to work with the Foundation for Chemistry, to help the University as a whole with its fundraising strategy and implementation.

I have taken all these decisions as a fait accompli, as they provide a starting point for the University's planning. The recommendations that follow, therefore, are not a matter of initiating a fundraising operation from scratch, but of building constructively on what is already committed to or actually in place.

Background

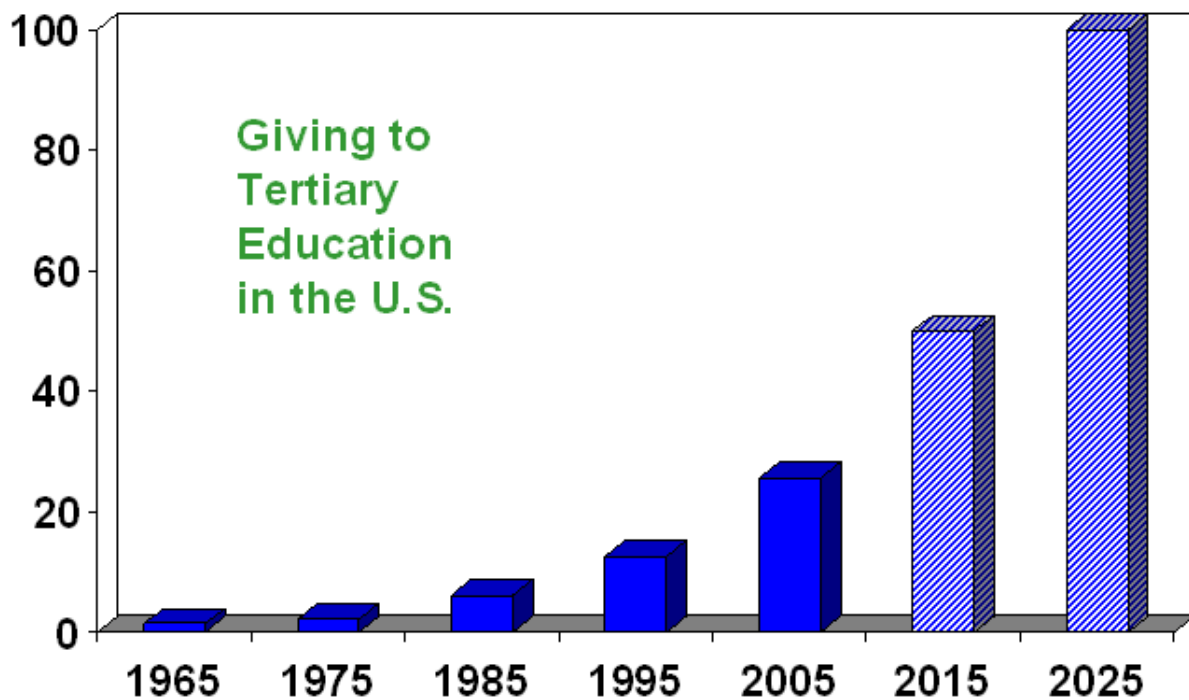
The motivations that have caused the three universities of Strasbourg to merge - and to include a report on fundraising as a specific element within the merger process - are commendable. The initiators of this project should be congratulated. The factors that encourage these developments are not unique to Strasbourg, however; nor to France, nor to Europe. All over the world, universities are grappling with equivalent concerns. The demands of the knowledge economy; the realisation that universities are in global competition for faculty, for research funding, for students and for reputation; the recognition that costs are bound to escalate when a commitment to widening access is added to a determination to maintain excellent standards; and the impact of demographic change on the ability of governments to fund universities adequately when an ageing population imposes other demands: these factors combine to

encourage universities to sharpen their understanding of their individual distinctiveness, to broaden their support base and to develop their ability to generate new sorts of funding.

The annual league table of universities prepared by Shanghai Jiao Tong University is a reminder of the virtuous circle where reputation leads to resources which underpin the recruitment of outstanding faculty, researchers and students, strengthen the affinity of alumni and other supporters and further enhance institutional standing.

These rankings – originating in China and dominated by US universities – make sobering reading for Europeans: [http://www.arwu.org/rank2008/Top500_EN\(by%20rank\).pdf](http://www.arwu.org/rank2008/Top500_EN(by%20rank).pdf) . Yet in fact, Europe has a long and proud tradition of philanthropy towards education: across the continent there are numerous examples of universities and colleges and schools – not to mention hospitals and museums and galleries – that were founded and sustained by philanthropic support. But it is fair to say that it is an interrupted tradition. Part of the challenge facing European universities is to help re-build a culture of giving to education. Philanthropy can be learned and fostered. It is notable that the remarkable level of giving to universities in the USA has not come about overnight but has been consciously and professionally encouraged. Levels of giving have approximately doubled each decade, as the table shows. (And, as another benchmark, giving to universities in the UK last year was at the point the table shows the USA as having reached in 1965.)

Billions in US\$



Recent changes affecting higher education in France, including the LRU law and the tax treatment of gifts, are most helpful in encouraging this evolution in attitude and practice. The landscape is changing. Conspicuous growth and increasing confidence is evident in the number of French educational institutions engaging actively in fundraising and in appointing staff to specialist fundraising roles. (ESSEC, Ecole Polytechnique, Institut Hautes Etudes Scientifiques, Université Pierre et Marie Curie and Université Catholique de Lille among them, have followed where INSEAD led in the 1990s.)

Strengths/advantages

The timing of the re-foundation of the Université de Strasbourg allows the institution potentially to catch both a national and an international tide, therefore. There will be a helping effect from parallel initiatives towards fundraising in education both elsewhere in France and elsewhere in Europe.

Particular characteristics and opportunities which should serve the University well include:

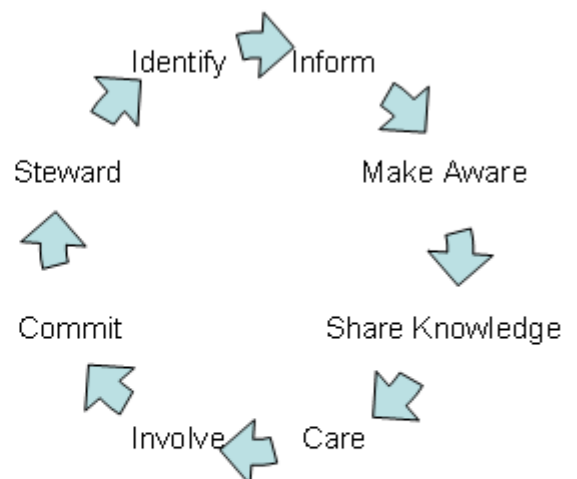
- The occasion of the merger provides energy internally and attention externally. It also supports the discipline of self-evaluation and the assessment of future direction, which an effective programme of fundraising demands.
- Forward-looking and energetic leadership.
- Strasbourg has an “endowment of place”: the distinguished history, name recognition, geographic access and diversity of cultural connections, are all special assets.
- Distinguished and distinctive elements to the universities’ character and offering (including a Nobel Prize winner and some high profile champions), which help with defining a compelling “case for support”.
- The University reports strong links with a range of industrial and corporate entities.
- Friendly relationships with other institutions and networks (e.g. the University of Florida, and LERU) that can provide models and comparators, serving to speed up the evolution of good practice in fundraising.

The core concepts underpinning fundraising for a university are captured in this diagram below. Educational institutions have the capacity to build long-term relationships with supporters – whether alumni, corporations/employers, regional bodies or grant-giving trusts – to understand their mutual aspirations and motivations and to engage them in the life of the university.

Core Concepts

Why People Give Money

People give money because they want to
They don't give unless they are asked
People give to people
People give to opportunities, not needs
People give to success, not to distress
People give money to make a change for the good



“People don’t give to organizations that have needs; they give to organizations that meet needs.”

- Kay Sprinkel Grace

Areas for caution

Matters the University may wish to bear in mind in the next few months include the following:

- Appointing a fundraiser and a fundraising consultancy are excellent moves. But, in themselves, that does not signify “mission accomplished”. Integrating the function into the University is the mindset that will deliver real long-term gains.
- Inevitably, there will be internal scepticism and even fearfulness about the Foundation model and the chances of success. Internal communication, as well as a programme of consistent external messages, will be reassuring. Achieving some early success in fundraising and publicising its impact would be a desirable goal.
- Conversely, some sections of the community and some entrepreneurial individuals will become “early adopters”. Care needs to be taken to avoid a splintering of mission. Uncoordinated and “maverick” approaches to donors can become self-defeating for the University’s overarching goals, particularly when it is seeking to instil a university-wide ethos.
- The University has followed, I understand, a bottom-up process of identifying key projects for support, including a set of semi-endowed, research-oriented Chairs, a coherent programme of Access and Museology. These seem highly plausible and the expression of the University’s vision through specific programmes such as these is exactly the right approach. However, donors have minds and ideas of their own. Testing the feasibility of the University’s plans on key donors ahead of final decision-making and some flexibility around negotiating the focus and/or approach of a project may pay dividends.

Recommendations

1. The Université de Strasbourg should take advantage of the opportunity of the merger to embed a fundraising strategy in the core thinking of the new institution.

2. In doing so, the University should seek to build on its existing strengths and relationships and to add good fundraising practice from the experience of others (adapted where necessary for local conditions).

This will require:

- Continuing commitment from the University leadership.
- Clarity of academic strategy (which translates into the “case for support”).
- Ongoing investment in a professional fundraising staff and systems.
- A programme to deepen understanding within the University of the value and practicability of educational philanthropy.
- A programme to increase the pool of supporters and engage them more closely in the life of the University.

3. The appointment of a designated staff member to take primary responsibility for implementing a fundraising strategy is a sine qua non. Having made the appointment, however, it is essential that the University does not think that they have “ticked that box” and can walk away, leaving her to do the job. Successful fundraising needs leadership from the top and ownership by the institution. It will be strengthened if the function relates self-consciously to parallel functions expressing the University’s purpose and ambitions, such as those concerning brand and communications. Are there synergies between the ideas in this report and those in the report on External and Internal Communication, I wonder?

4. A professional fundraising effort requires not only a consistent programme of communications with supporters - including alumni, friends, corporate partners, employers and government - but also a database with sufficient functionality and currency both to underpin the communications programme and to track connections with key friends. Co-ordinating records and information from across the merging institutions will require determination and diplomacy but should be a high priority task.

5. Happily, fundraising for education is not a zero sum game. When professional staff learn from each other and when University Presidents and academic champions compare experiences, the general level of expertise and confidence rises. CASE would encourage you to look closely at the experiences of others. Continue to draw on the relationship with the University of Florida, which is clearly creative and stimulating, but also explore exchanges of views and experiences closer to home. In particular, I recommend a visit to the University of Manchester to examine the experience of building up a Development Office – and a clear brand - in a merged institution, and strengthening affinity with alumni from formerly distinct institutions. Manchester's experience of support from the city and region may also be relevant. There are other helpful models within the LERU network including not only Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh (each of which is running highly ambitious fundraising campaigns currently), but also Karolinska Institutet, KU Leuven and the University of Amsterdam. Training in fundraising for your professional staff should be an ongoing priority and regular exposure to forums where such matters are discussed will be valuable for the academic leadership of the University. Meetings of CASE in Europe (including the next Forum for University Rectors and Presidents to be held in Barcelona in May 2009, the CASE Europe Annual Conference next held in Liverpool in August 2009, and gatherings of the Association Française des Fundraisers) will all build skills, networks and courage.

6. A programme of student engagement, of developing thoughtful relationships with students while they are enrolled and on campus, rather than delaying until they are graduated and diffuse, is a concept to which European universities are paying increasing attention. I was impressed to hear of the first ever doctoral commencement ceremony with the involvement of M. Jean-Paul Garnier. Arranging, and charting more such milestones in the student journey will give colour and focus to affinity with the University and its ambitions.

7. It is easy to generate a long “to-do” list and harder to prioritise the most load-bearing actions. In the interests of demonstrating the value to the University of a commitment to fundraising, we would recommend an early project to identify the 100 or so individuals with the greatest ability to influence support for the institution. These are likely to include graduates highly placed in companies both abroad and in France and other friends engaged with the University, or invested in the region. Researching this list is likely to mean discussions with faculty groups and alumni societies across the three existing universities. In itself, the exercise can build understanding and participation internally. It should also generate a focused group of individuals and companies where attention will pay greatest dividends.

8. In relation to that key group, the University should note that wealthy philanthropists in contemporary times tend to seek *impact*: they enjoy making philanthropic *investment* in *solutions*. Shaping and discussing the University's projects in those terms will be more compelling than an institutional wish list!

Two reports capturing further argument and insights around the facilitation of giving to universities in Europe are listed below.

- Thomas Report on Increasing Voluntary Giving to Higher Education. (Department for Education and Skills, May 2004)
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/hegateway/uploads/Increasing%20Voluntary%20Giving%20to%20Higher%20Education%20-%20Task%20Force%20Report%20to%20Government.pdf>
- Engaging Philanthropy for University Research: Report by an Expert Group on Fundraising by Universities from Philanthropic Sources: Developing Partnerships between Universities and Private Donors. (European Commission – Directorate General for Research, February 2008)
http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/pdf/download_en/rapport2007_final.pdf

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