Public Abstract

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Universities depend on private gifts to help fill the funding gap between tuition and public funding sources. With increasing competition from other nonprofit organizations for limited resources, it is imperative that university personnel do all they can to retain donors who support them. The purpose of this study was to determine if purposeful stewardship and donor relations have a correlation to overall dollars raised by the university advancement personnel for scholarships from year to year. Stewardship data was collected from 45 Carnegie classified bachelor's and master's degree granting colleges and universities whose staff had participated for six consecutive years in the Voluntary Support of Education (VSE) survey as administered by the Council for Aid to Education (CAE).

Data analysis did not show a significant correlation between six specific stewardship activities and the average dollars given for scholarships each year nor the average change in giving for scholarships. However, a sample of current university stewardship practices were identified as well as implications for future research. For higher education institutions to continue being successful fundraisers, more research is needed to develop tools for measuring effective donor relations and donor stewardship.