

A Different Animal . . .

Major Gift (or capital) fundraising is not something that most of our House Corporations or their officers frequently do. Yes, many of us volunteer to help with annual fundraising at our children's schools, our churches, and synagogues or other charitable groups, but major gift fundraising is a different animal.

Phi Gamma Delta has seen multiple chapter-specific fundraising campaigns over the years. Should your House Corporation be considering – or need to consider - the possibility of raising money from graduates to build, purchase or renovate a chapter house, or for some other purpose, we must first understand the two most common types of fraternity fundraising campaigns in the Greek world.

Types of Fundraising: Annual and Major Gift (or capital)

You may already be raising money through an Annual Fund, which is a great first step. Annual gifts may provide a modest income (typically \$5,000 - \$25,000) for routine house maintenance or for supporting the chapter in recruitment, which is certainly helpful.

The second kind of fundraising is **major gift fundraising** which is a concentrated effort to raise funds for capital projects. In the Greek world, this is typically for the building, purchase, or renovation of a chapter house. Campaigns can, however, fund other types of projects such as academic scholarship endowments or leadership training conferences, for example.

Regardless of the specific project(s) for which capital is needed, in the Greek world, major gift campaigns typically have fundraising goals of \$500,000 - \$5,000,000. They require significant effort and planning, as they take place over a two - to three-year period.

One mistake to avoid is the idea of "fair share" fundraising. If you need to raise \$1,000,000 and have 1,000 living graduates, someone will undoubtedly suggest, "Hey, let's just ask everyone to contribute \$1,000 and we've raised a million dollars!" That never works, for one simple reason - not all of your graduates will contribute. In fact, in the average fraternity fundraising campaign, if you get 15% of your graduates to make a gift, you are doing well; the best campaigns *might* reach as high as 25%.

These days, almost all house corporations are raising funds. Our chapter houses need to be well-maintained to provide safe and comfortable living environments for today's undergraduate brothers. Endowed scholarships can assist our young brothers in their academic pursuits. Whatever the reason, graduate brothers should be invited to consider a financial investment in Phi Gamma Delta!

Do you have other questions about fundraising campaigns or specifically about raising money for your chapter? Successful fundraising campaigns require time, expertise, and organization, so if you are thinking about a renovation or rebuild in the next several years, it is not too soon to contact us to discuss your project or get other questions answered.

Mark R. Wilkison (Vermont'83)
Principal & Partner
2870 Peachtree Road, Suite 956
Atlanta, GA 30305
www.columnsfundraising.com
Direct: 404-317-0435