

CLARE COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

**ALUMNI COUNCIL ANNUAL FUND COMMITTEE**

21 September 2009      At a meeting held at 6.30 pm in the Godwin Room

Present                      David Hartley (Secretary of the Alumni Association, Chair),  
Hugh Macmillan, Frazer Smith, Chris Withers,  
Toby Wilkinson (Development Director), Sarah Harmer (Head of  
Individual Giving) and Johnny Langridge (Development Associate)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2009

These were received and approved.

- (i)      The Development Director confirmed that lists of lost alumni had been sent to year-group representatives, and that there had been a positive response. The College lacked current addresses for approximately 1000 alumni; tracking them down would need to be an ongoing effort.
- (ii)     The Head of Individual Giving reported that 50 alumni called during the 2009 telephone campaign had been asked for feedback. Those who responded said they had welcomed the call, whether or not they had decided to make a donation, and commented on the politeness of the student callers. Feedback from callers had also been positive, and would help to refine the calling script for the 2010 telephone campaign. The exercise would be repeated in future years.
- (iii)    The Development Director confirmed that the Alumni Relations Strategy had been sent to all YGRs and was also available on the alumni website.
- (iv)    The Chairman reported that the Events Committee of the Alumni Council had agreed proposals for a Family Day, to be held in June/July 2010, and for a regular drinks evening for younger alumni in London, as part of a programme to engage alumni in their 20s, 30s and 40s.
- (v)    The Development Director reported that the enthusiasm for 'class giving' differed greatly between year-groups, and that the time was not yet right to roll it out across all years. Reunion dinners provided an important stimulus, but the initiative for class giving had to come from within a year-group; it could not be imposed by the College. Once the success of the 1956/1957 class gift was publicised, other year-groups might decide to follow suit.

2. Fundraising research

The Development Director summarised the findings of recent academic research on philanthropic giving, noting that it was particularly important for the telephone campaign ask amounts to be aspirational (while also realistic), in order to maximise giving. The findings concurred with recent work on influencing strategies.

3. Report on the 2009 Annual Fund

The Head of Individual Giving presented updated statistics on the 2009 Annual Fund, noting that the number of donors to date was exactly the same as in 2008 while the average gift size was markedly greater. The success of the 2009 Annual Fund could be attributed to several factors: the extra effort put into preparing a really compelling case for support; the focus on inviting existing donors to renew their support; the 'culture of giving' that was beginning to

take root among alumni; and the positive impact, though hard to quantify, of the Cambridge 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign. The trend of departments and faculties starting their own fundraising activities was noted with concern, and it was agreed that careful coordination would be required between the University and the Colleges if such activity were not to have an adverse impact on College fundraising or alienate donors. The Development Director assured the Committee that the situation was being monitored carefully by the relevant bodies within Cambridge. The Committee congratulated the College and the Head of Individual Giving on an excellent result in the 2009 Annual Fund.

4. 2010 Telephone Campaign cases for support

The Development Associate reminded the Committee that the 2010 Telephone Campaign would have two distinct cases for support, each targeted at a particular constituency. Alumni known to have an interest in music would receive the Campaign for Music case for support; other alumni would receive the 'independent study and research' case for support, with the pre-call letter appropriately tailored to the subject they had studied at Clare.

- (i) Independent Study and Research It was agreed that the funding need should be more clearly articulated, both in the brochure and in the pre-call letter. The brochure pictures should convey a more serious sense of academic purpose, while the quotes from students should be replaced by statements from Directors of Studies and supervisors, noting the academic importance of independent study and research. The pre-call letter might avoid repeating the phrase 'the precious pearl of learning' and should be in larger type. Lessening the sense of compulsion to make a gift and striking a note of humility on the part of the College might also encourage more people to respond positively. It was noted that callers needed to display a genuine interest in the alumni they spoke to, in keeping with the promise made in the final paragraph of the pre-call letter.
- (ii) Campaign for Music It was agreed that the picture on the front of the brochure needed a caption to identify it as the Clare College Music Society. The case for support should acknowledge Clare's pre-eminent position for music among the Cambridge colleges, while the funding need should strike a note of urgency. It was agreed that it would be worth sending the Campaign for Music case for support to some non-musicians, as a control sample. The brochure would benefit from more quotes from musicians with a Clare connection, and perhaps also from some archive pictures to demonstrate the 30-year tradition of musical excellence. A quote from John Rutter in the pre-call letter would give it greater weight.

The Development Director and Development Associate would make extensive re-drafts to both brochures and pre-call letters and circulate revised versions to the Committee within a week for their feedback. It was hoped that final versions of both cases for support would be ready in time to go to the meeting of the College Council on 19 October.

**Action: Development Director/Development Associate**

5. Improvement of the Annual Fund: strategy and mechanics

- (i) It was agreed that the Annual Fund strategy and the training for Telephone Campaign callers needed to be alert to the public debate about University funding.
- (ii) The Annual Report was welcomed as an impressive and helpful publication. Concerns were expressed about the College's recent academic performance, and it was agreed that alumni feedback would be helpful to reinforce the measures already being taken to address the matter.

- (iii) It was agreed that the calling script for the 2010 Telephone Campaign would be tested on the Committee, and that the training for callers should incorporate practice calls to Committee members.

**Action: Development Associate**

6. Closing remarks and date of next meeting

The Chairman thanked members of the Committee for their continued advice and support. It was agreed that the Committee should continue to meet bi-annually. The date of the next meeting would be arranged, by circulation, for April 2010.

**Action: Development Director/Development Associate**