

CLARE COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE

ALUMNI COUNCIL ANNUAL FUND COMMITTEE

29 April 2009

At a meeting held at 6.30 pm in the Thirkill Room

Present

David Hartley (Secretary of the Alumni Association, Chair),
Hugh Macmillan, Frazer Smith, Chris Withers,
Toby Wilkinson (Development Director), Sarah Harmer
(Development Officer) and Johnny Langridge (Development Assistant)

1. Welcome and re-confirmation of the Committee's remit

Dr Hartley welcomed members of the Committee to the meeting and thanked them for giving their time to assist the College in developing its Annual Fund. The remit and advisory role of the Committee were re-confirmed.

2. Report on the 2009 Annual Fund

(i) The Development Officer presented a set of updated figures on the outcome of the 2009 Annual Fund. The Development Director noted that 2009 had been a record-breaking year for Clare and two other Cambridge colleges, and outlined some of the underlying factors. In subsequent discussion, the processes for segmenting the database, choosing the constituency for the telephone campaign and running the telephone campaign were explained in detail. It was noted that Year Group Representatives could play a valuable role in finding lost alumni, and that each YGR should be provided with a list of lost members from his/her year.

Action: Head of Alumni Relations

(ii) It was noted that the big UK charities conducted research on what motivates people to give, and that some of this information might be publicly available and useful to the College.

Action: Development Assistant

(iii) It was agreed that a good method of testing the effectiveness of the 2009 telephone campaign would be to contact a sample of those called (100 to 200 individuals) and ask for specific feedback. The student callers should also be de-briefed and asked to identify the most effective parts of their conversations; these messages could then be incorporated in the direct mailing case for support in 2010.

Action: Development Officer

3. 2010 Annual Fund: proposed case for support

(i) The Development Assistant introduced the proposed case for support for the 2010 Annual Fund, noting that a second project was required to complement the Campaign for Music. Discussion focussed on the need for financial support to help students with projects directly related to their studies; this message could easily be tailored to the target constituency. In general, it was agreed that the quality and richness of alumni data was key to the success of the Annual Fund, and that all steps should be taken (through questionnaires, the website, and YGRs) to enhance the information available to the College.

Action: All

(ii) It was further agreed that greater sophistication in segmenting the target constituency would be likely to achieve better results in the 2010 telephone campaign. Hence, those known to have an interest in music would receive the music case for support, while others would receive the 'student research fund' proposal, appropriately tailored.

Action: Development Assistant

4. Improvement of the Annual Fund: strategy and mechanics

(i) It was noted that alumni needed to understand the nature and purpose of their continuing relationship with the College, and that the Alumni Relations Strategy document could help in this regard. It was agreed that a condensed version of the document should be prepared and sent to all alumni. Extracts from the document might also provide the basis of articles in Clare News.

Action: Development Director

(ii) YGRs could play an important role in reaching out to alumni whose engagement with the College was latent but not yet active. The 10-year gap between Reunion Dinners was thought to be rather long, and it was agreed that further thought should be given to the programme of events for engaging alumni, particularly those in their 30s and 40s; a Family Day was one suggestion.

Action: Head of Alumni Relations

(iii) It was suggested that year groups might be encouraged to fund-raise for 'class gifts' on the US model. The Development Director reported that 1956/57 had embarked on such an initiative following their recent Reunion Dinner, with some success. As a first step, it was hoped that years marking 25 and 50 years since graduation might be encouraged to adopt the 'class giving' model.

Action: Development Director

(iv) It was noted that publishing 'league tables' and fostering competition between years for the highest participation rate might alienate some older alumni. The Development Director agreed that there were cultural differences between the US and the UK in terms of charitable giving, and that the College's fundraising strategy needed to tread a fine line between too hard and too soft an approach.

(v) It was agreed that the calling script for the 2010 telephone campaign would be tested in advance on a small group of volunteers, including the members of the Committee.

Action: Development Assistant

5. Closing remarks and date of next meeting

Dr Hartley repeated his thanks to the members of the Committee for their advice and support. The date of the next meeting would be arranged, by circulation, for the second half of September. At that meeting, draft materials for the 2010 direct mail and telephone campaign would be presented for discussion and feedback.

Action: Development Officer/Development Assistant