



## **Common Values Precede Uncommon Success**

In 1991, tasked with rebuilding (in a politically charged environment) the philanthropy program at the University of Virginia, I proposed a set of personal values that every current and future member of the team could internalize and embrace. Leadership and values are timeless. Some 29 years later, and over \$5 Billion raised, these same values are re-imagined to achieve similar results in philanthropic consulting.

Fundraising professionals feel extraordinary pressure to achieve results at all costs. Their careers and the future of their institutions depend on philanthropic achievement. The following values, applied in partnership with the client institution, provide the opportunity for uncommon success:

### **Integrity**

Relationships with client institutions will not be exploited for personal benefit. There will be no conflicts of interest in weighing consulting opportunities. Actions that might compromise the long term good of the client for the sake of short-term expediency, will be carefully avoided. The reputation of client institutions must never be compromised by the consultant's public behavior.

### **Kindness**

Regardless of the size and complexity of the client institution, its success is always determined by the commitment, energy and quality of the team. My primary goal is to bring out the unique qualities of the team, motivating them to be better than they believe they can be. Performance is greatly affected by the team's feelings of ownership and appreciation. Kindness is my touchstone for each and every institutional relationship.

### **Humility**

Humility is the awareness that there is a lot you don't know and that a lot of what you think you know is distorted or wrong. It requires a new way of thinking. Zen Buddhism has a name for it: Shoshin, a "beginner's mind." Discarding preconceived notions and withholding judgment enables one to more fully understand the complexity of a given situation.

**Loyalty**

My personal commitment to the mission of the client institution is essential. There will be transparency in my relationships with the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Development Officer. Striving to find the right alignment among Consultant, the CEO and CDO requires honest and open communications with all parties. I envision my role as representing the institution, not any specific individual.

**Passion**

My drive and commitment seek to energize, engage and inspire others. It will fuel institutional confidence by leading the way, not showing the way.

**Teamwork**

Success is always the result of team effort. Trust, collaboration and thought leadership will bring out the best in the advancement team, its volunteers, donors and me. At its best, my counsel will add value as a co-strategist in this ensemble cast.

**Quality**

The excellence of the client institution will be reinforced through the quality of my work; my correspondence and communication; my personal interactions; and the accuracy of my data, reports, audits and studies. Moreover, the pursuit of excellence is cost-efficient.

**Initiative**

Client institutions need catalysts for action and change, not simply responding to events and circumstances. As a catalyst, I will advocate for bold and independent action and assume certain attendant personal (but not ethical) risks. When the best interests of the institution are at stake, my responsibilities may go beyond the normal scope of my assignment.

**Innovation**

Philanthropy confronts real issues, challenges and opportunities. A consulting model, that serves as a “difference-maker,” combines the growth possibilities of mentoring and strategy with the validation of data. This model embraces the latest technology while providing sound advice and counsel. The result is a unique combination of “high-tech” and “high-touch.” My advocacy embraces both the cutting-edge big idea as well as small, but equally important, changes to structure and organization. Both define fundraising success.

## Promoting a Culture of Philanthropy: My Consulting Commitment

A culture of philanthropy is one in which everyone --volunteer leadership, the CEO and the CDO--plays a crucial part. It's a culture in which fundraising is a valued and mission-aligned component of everything the institution does.

To create this culture, institutions must focus on the core issues of building capacity, systems and a true "joint venture" approach in seeking significant private resources.

A culture of philanthropy starts with a culture of gratitude within the institution:

1. Philanthropy is never about the money. It is always about aligning donor passion with institutional need. It is about the institution's promise for the future and its ability to change its community, region, nation or world.
2. Institutions that strive for a culture of philanthropy expect administrators, faculty and staff to partner with advancement to serve as ambassadors, build relationships, use individual networks and make important connections with its alumni as well as the corporate and foundation communities.
3. An institution has an obligation to engage, involve and intellectually stimulate its alumni for their lifetimes, regardless of possible philanthropic reward
4. An institution must understand analytics without ignoring intangibles. It must focus on effort and improvement, trusting that the philanthropic results will follow.
5. Fundraising must be elevated from the transactional to the relational. Donors need to be seen as partners who share institutional goals and aspirations and participate in achieving them.
6. Quality fundraising begins with visionary strategic direction and a compelling case for support.
7. The CEO, the CDO and the governing board must provide active leadership and management of the fundraising process.
8. A fundamentally sound, well-written fundraising plan must map out the overall direction and timeline of any fundraising effort.
9. Lead gifts play the vital role in the success of any major funding project. The top gift, the top 10 gifts and the top 100 gifts will drive a campaign. A well-articulated appeal for large gifts is a must.
10. Goal setting must be bold and exciting but, ultimately, attainable.
11. Successful campaigns result from having (an) engaged, inspirational volunteer leader(s), well communicated and understood volunteer roles and a workable organizational structure. Volunteers require guidance in solicitations and a comfort level with the case for support.

## Robert D. Sweeney: Accomplishments of a 45 Year Advancement Career



Bob Sweeney has spent his entire career leading colleges and universities in maximizing their fundraising and public outreach. He has represented some of America's important public and private institutions during pivotal periods in their history. He leverages vision, strong leadership and generating significant private resources into a narrative for increasing prominence. Among those served are the University of Virginia, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Richmond and Loyola University. He served at the vice president level for 33 years.

As UVA's Senior Vice President for University Advancement, Mr. Sweeney was the architect of two of the largest campaigns in the history of public higher education. In 2000, he led a remarkable team to a \$1.43 billion campaign success. At the time, it was the largest amount ever raised by a public university. In 2013, his team completed a \$3 billion fundraising effort that placed the University of Virginia within an elite group of less than 10 institutions. During his tenure at UVA, Mr. Sweeney orchestrated funding exceeding \$5 billion.

He is a recipient of The Thomas Jefferson Award, the University of Virginia's highest honor for life-time service to the University, The Serpentine Award for his commitment to UVA's LGBT community and, upon retirement, was named as the University's first Senior Vice President for Advancement, Emeritus.

On June 30, 2016, Mr. Sweeney retired after 25 years as Senior Vice President. He served an additional year as Senior Philanthropic Advisor to the President. In 2016, he founded Sweeney/Philanthropy LLC serving both US, EU and Asian clients. He also serves Of Counsel to the international philanthropy firm of Marts & Lundy. Presently, Mr. Sweeney as counsel to the University of Colorado Boulder, the National University of Singapore and SMU. Over the past 36 months, other assignments include: University of South Florida, University of Missouri Kansas City, the international business school HEC Paris and the University of Richmond.

Mr. Sweeney serves on the Board of Directors of the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation. His past service includes the Boards of Trustees of St. Joseph Hospital (Towson, MD), his alma mater Niagara University (where he received an honorary Doctor of Commercial Science degree in 2006), the Better Angels Society (the philanthropic arm for documentarian Ken Burns) and several University of Virginia related foundations including the Virginia Health Foundation, the Virginia Athletics Foundation, and the University of Virginia Foundation. He is a member of Alpha Sigma Nu, the Jesuit Honor Society recognizing his contributions to Jesuit education while leading Loyola University in Maryland.

For 10 years, until his retirement, Mr. Sweeney was awarded a home on the Grounds of the University of Virginia, residing in Pavilion VI of Thomas Jefferson's Academical Village, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Mr. Sweeney is married to Lili Powell a professor with appointments in the Darden School of Business and the UVA School of Nursing. Earning a Ph.D. from Northwestern University, Professor Powell holds the Maria Kluge Endowed Chair in Compassionate Care.