



Student Engagement



Dr. PJ Thompson
Executive Director for
University Advancement
Saint Xavier University



Black Dollars Matter...
A Conversation about African
American Alumni Engagement
in Philanthropy

3:00 PM

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Black Dollars Matter... A Conversation about African American Alumni Engagement in Philanthropy

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Why This Topic?

Personal and Professional Experiences

Introduction

The Development of the Alumni Association

Historically, the relationship society has with colleges and universities has been measured through the role alumni play in promoting the institution, but also in their support through participation in giving (Williams, Bonner, Monts, Louis, & Robinson, 2014; Caboni, 2003; Gunsalus, 2003; Stevick, 2010; Wunnava & Lauze, 2001; Weerts, 1998).

Introduction

Alumni Giving

- Charitable giving in the U.S. exceeded \$400 billion in 2017 (Giving USA, 2018).
- Giving to educational institutions nearly \$59 billion
 - second-largest category
- Charitable donations to colleges and universities is less than half of the amount given to religious organizations and only slightly more than gifts to human services (Abbe, 2000; Giving USA, 2018).

Introduction

African American Giving

- The Black church has been one of the most important institutions connected to African Americans giving (Abbe, 2000; Jackson, 2001).
- Giving tithes and offering is a long standing tradition in the black church.
- Free Blacks in the North established Black churches to assist other African Americans in need (Carter & Marx, 2007; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

Key Literature

- “The Donor Gap”, giving by African Americans to nonprofit organizations hovered around 12% through 2010.
- African Americans donate to place of worship, health charities, children's charities, and local social service organizations (Rovner, 2015; Radcliffe, 2011).
- Higher education does not rise to the top as one of their giving priorities (Rovner, 2015).

Key Literature

- Giving amongst African Americans is a resource that continues to be under-utilized in college and university fundraising initiatives.
- Burley, Butner, Causey-Bush, and Bush (2007) found Institutional Advancement offices at PWIs showed little interest in the research about the opinions of African-American alumni.
- A myth among fund-raisers is African Americans do not support philanthropy (Misek, 2004)

Key Literature

- African Americans are more likely to make a donation when asked than many other cultural communities (Cohen, 2006; Holloman, Gasman, & Anderson-Thompkins, 2003).
- Student experience, alumni perceptions, and alumni engagement have significant correlations to alumni giving (Pope, 2014), yet minimal research has been conducted on this topic.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is:

- A) to enlighten institutional advancement professionals in higher education on the trends in giving by African Americans
- B) to provide insight on African American donors' perceptions and attitudes towards giving to their alma maters in an effort to increase participation.

Research Questions

1. Does the undergraduate academic experience or student extra curricular experience affect African American alumni participation in giving at PWIs?
2. Is there a relationship between engagement and participation in giving by African American alumni graduates of PWIs?

Data Collection

- Population: African American Alumni of PWIs in Illinois
- Demographics: Institutions in Illinois (Public, Private, Religious-Based)
- Research Tool: Online Survey via Qualtrics
SPSS (Quantitative Study)

Population and Sampling

- Target Population: African-American alumni who received an undergraduate degree from a PWI in Illinois
- Recruitment: Recruited participants by posting a flyer on Facebook in several groups with members that fit the demographic.
- 319 respondents attempted to complete the survey
- 215 complete responses (66% completion rate of those who attempted the survey)
- Respondents from 28 Institutions in Illinois

Data Analysis

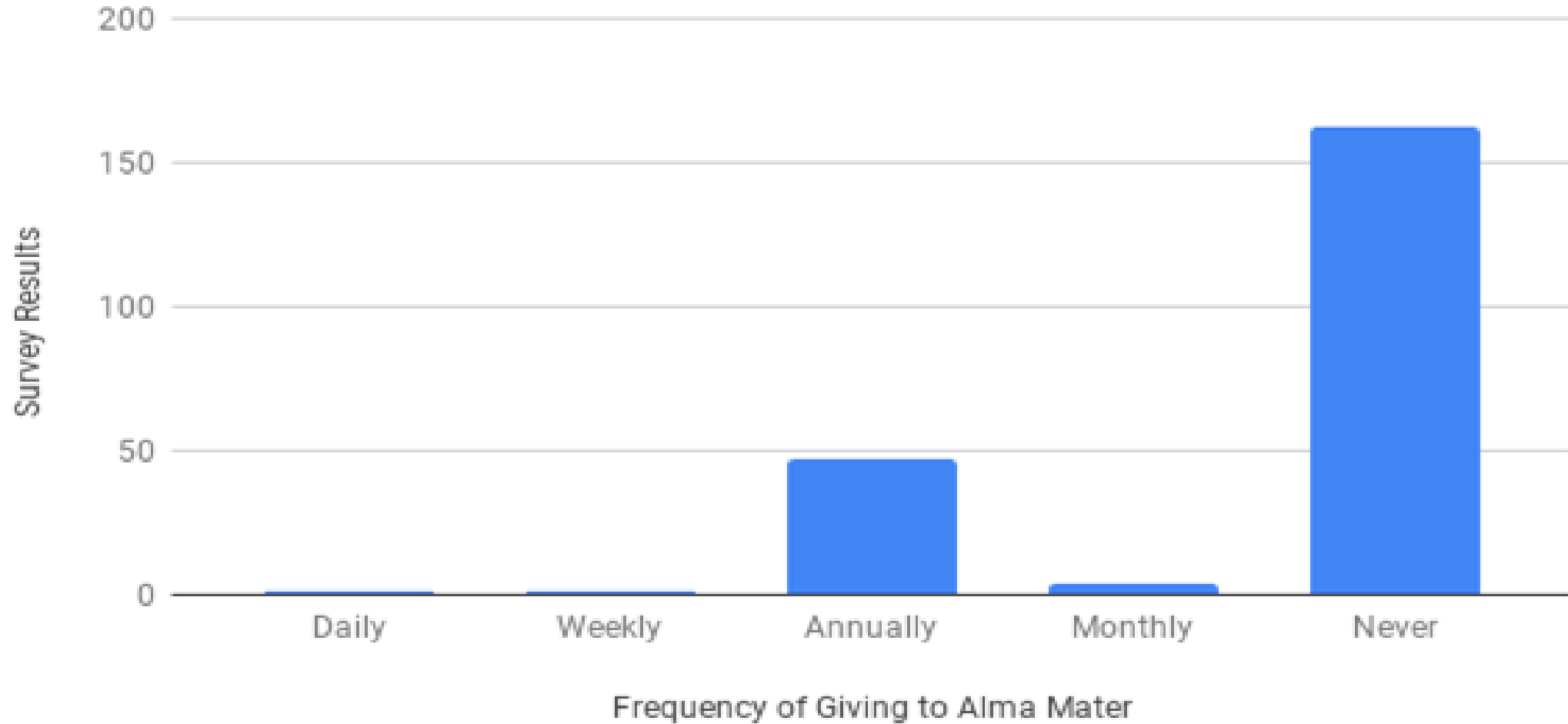
- Dr. Jasmine Pope (2014) *Why Don't They Give Back: Alumni Giving at Two Historically Black Colleges and Universities*
- Descriptive statistics including mean, median, mode, Pearson r correlation one-tailed test, and standard deviation
- Creswell (2012), correlation “explains how changes in one variable are reflected in changes in the other” (p. 340).

Data Analysis

The results will be explained and presented in the following sections:

- Alumni Giving (frequency of giving to alma mater)
- Student Experience (academic and extracurricular)
- Alumni Perceptions (satisfaction with the decision to attend alma mater and post-graduate success)
- Alumni Engagement (alumni involvement and frequency of communication with alma mater)

Data Analysis- Alumni Giving



Data Analysis- Alumni Giving

- 75.3% reported never contributed
- 21% reported annual contributions
- 1.8% reported monthly contributions

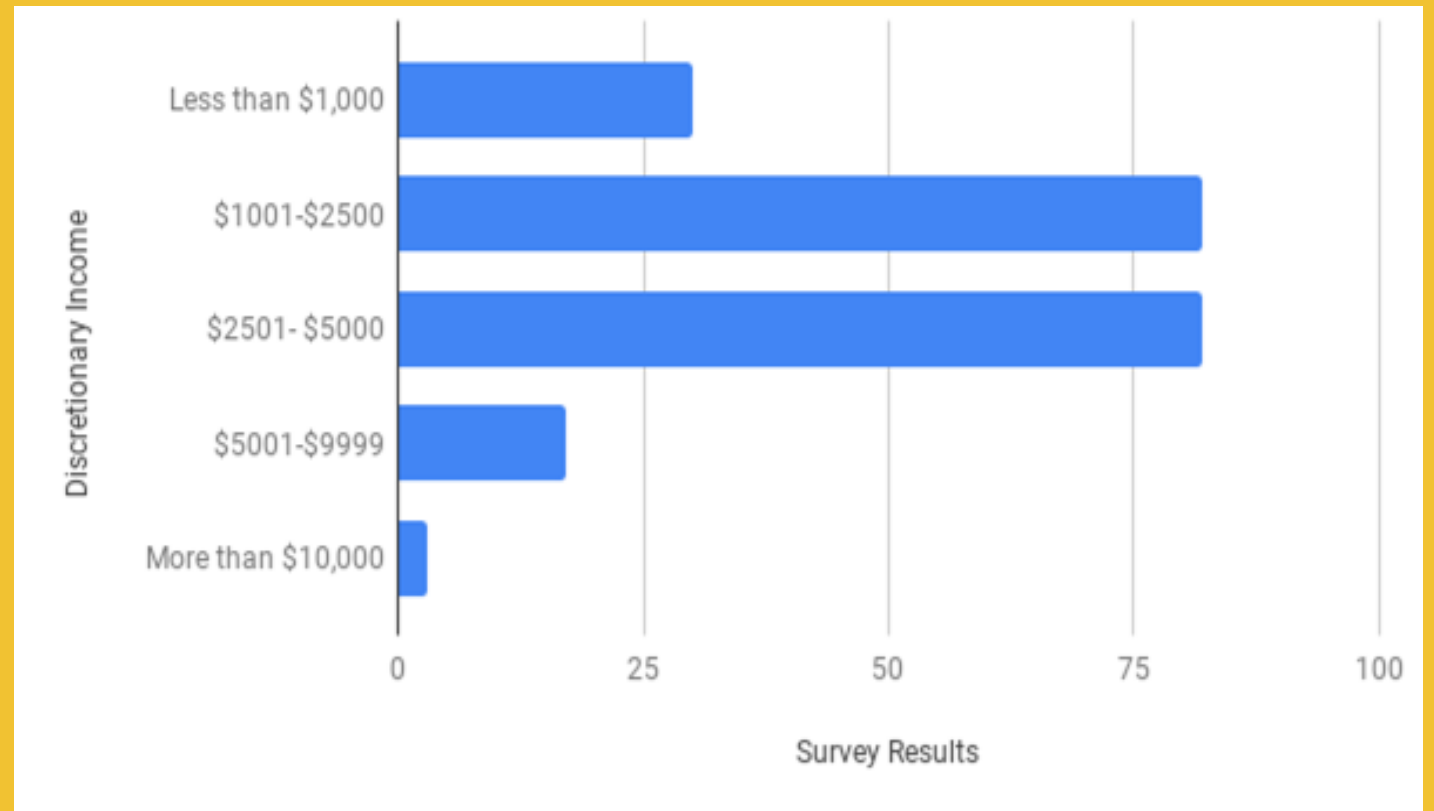
Data Analysis- Alumni Giving

Figure 2:
Income Levels of Respondents



Data Analysis- Alumni Giving

**Figure 3:
Discretionary Income of Respondents**



Data Analysis- Student Experience

Academic Student Experience

The results of these questions were analyzed using a one-tailed Pearson r correlation, which assessed the relationship between academic student experience and alumni giving. The analysis revealed there was no correlation between the two variables [$r = -.088$, $n = 215$, $p = .100$). Thus, there is not a statistically significant relationship ($p < .05$) between academic student experience and alumni giving.

Data Analysis- Student Experience

Extracurricular Student Experience

The results of these questions were analyzed using a one-tailed Pearson r correlation, which assessed the relationship between extra-curricular student experience and alumni giving. The analysis revealed there is a correlation between the two variables [$r = -.209$, $n = 215$, $p = .001$]. Thus, there is a statistically significant relationship ($p < .001$) between extra-curricular student experience and alumni giving.

Data Analysis- Alumni Perceptions

Alumni perceptions of collegiate experience

Questions: “How would you describe your overall experience with attending your alma mater?” and “How would you describe your level of satisfaction with the decision to attend your alma mater?”

78.1% of respondents were satisfied with their collegiate experience and their decision to attend their alma mater.

Data Analysis- Alumni Perceptions

Alumni perceptions of collegiate experience

The analysis revealed that there is a correlation between alumni giving and (a) overall satisfaction with the alma mater [$r = -.159$, $n = 215$, $p = .010$], and (b) the level of satisfaction of respondents with their decision to attend the alma mater [$r = -.144$, $n = 215$, $p = .017$]. There is a statistically significant relationship ($p < .01$ and $p < .05$, respectively) between both variables of alumni perceptions of collegiate experience and alumni giving.

Data Analysis- Alumni Engagement

Alumni Engagement

- 80% of respondents never attended an alumni association meeting or activity.
- 81.3% of respondents indicated they did not consider themselves members of the alumni association

Data Analysis- Alumni Engagement

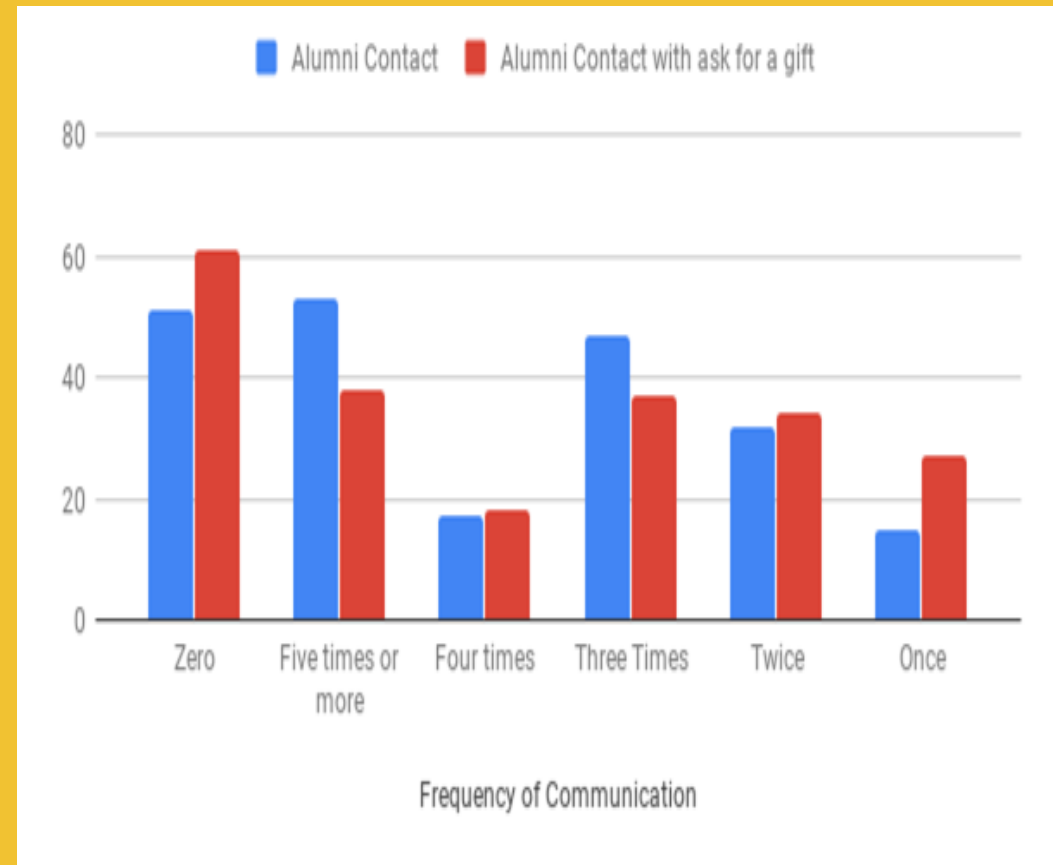
Alumni Engagement

A one-tailed Pearson r correlation revealed a relationship between alumni giving and (a) alumni association membership [$r = -.361, n = 215, p = .000$] and (b) attendance at alumni events [$r = .391, n = 215, p = .000$]. Thus, there is a statistically significant relationship ($p < .01$) between the alumni engagement variables and alumni giving.

Data Analysis- Alumni Engagement

Frequency of Communication

- 24% of all respondents had been contacted by their alma mater at least five times.
- 28.3% had never been solicited for a donation.



Data Analysis- Alumni Engagement

The analysis revealed there is not a correlation between alumni giving and (a) communication frequency [$r = .047$, $n = 215$, $p = .247$] and (b) requests for donations [$r = -.031$, $n = 215$, $p = .324$]. Thus, there is not a statistically significant relationship ($p < .05$) between alumni giving and the other two variables.

Discussion

The survey data has exposed the reality of the attitudes and perceptions of African-American alumni graduates of PWIs in Illinois. The research validates that the literature on student experience, alumni engagement, and alumni giving answer the research questions.

1. Does the student experience affect African American alumni participation in giving at PWIs?
2. Is there a relationship between engagement and participation in giving by African American alumni graduates of PWIs?

Discussion- Recommendations

Affinity group programming

- Past research has found that participation in extracurricular activities while in college is a determinant of a graduate's decision to make donations to the institution later (Burk, 2016; Gallo & Hubschman, 2003).

Discussion- Recommendations

Specialized marketing

- Alumni engagement has been a factor in giving for African-American alumni (Pope, 2014).
- Creating segmented mailers specifically for African-American alumni may increase involvement (Gasman, 2002; Stuart, 2009; Williams, et al., 2014).

Discussion- Recommendations

Institutional advancement staff diversity

- The treatment and discrimination Blacks have endured in America has left many among this population apprehensive to trust organizations, and trust is a major factor in a person's decision to make financial gifts (Abbe, 2000).

Discussion- Recommendations

Initiatives inspiring philanthropy

- Research reflects that African-Americans are more inclined to give to initiatives that advance their race as a whole (Gasman, 2002; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).
- African Americans have demonstrated support for college scholarships, for example, through the United Negro College Fund (Gasman, 2002).

Data Analysis- Recommendations

Education of philanthropy

- Continuing to educate alumni about philanthropy could have an impact on the frequency of giving. Gasman (2002) endorses beginning this education before Black students graduate.

Conclusion

- Student experiences at PWIs, have not always been pleasant for African-American students.
- Dissatisfying college experiences are a contributing factor to less participation in giving among African-American alumni (Gallo & Hubschman, 2003; Rovner, 2015).

References

References are provided in the manuscript.

Questions/Comments

Dr. PJ Thompson
pbthompson03@gmail.com

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Student Engagement



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regarding this session*