Why the percentage of alumni giving matters

There is a very simple explanation for why alumni giving is important:

The percentage of alumni giving is an easy number to report that demonstrates the satisfaction of alumni with their alma mater.

In other words:

- Alumni giving is a vote of confidence in your alma mater.
- Alumni giving shows satisfaction regarding your education.
- The percentage of alumni giving is an often requested metric that is used to indicate how committed alumni are to a university.
- Alumni are the people most invested in the university. It is, after all, THEIR institution. They care most about the university. If alumni are not giving — demonstrating that they are not invested — it is easy for other philanthropists to dismiss the importance of an institution. If the alumni don’t care about the fiscal health of their alma mater, why should anyone else?

Many corporate and foundation application specifically request what percentage of board members give to the institution. When a positive giving percentage is represented by alumni and faculty and staff, grant writers frequently will include those facts in the narrative for the application, helping to represent the viability of the institution and the commitment of their constituencies.

Fiscal stability is a requirement for most recipients of most corporate and foundation grants – often stated in grant criteria. Fiscally stability is not only documented by income and budgets, but by the long-term support of donors. In the case of university, alumni make up the largest base of support by far. A good percentage of alumni giving indicates the long-term viability of an institution. Grant makers are investing in a cause. Therefore, they are going to put their money where it has the power to do the most good.

No matter what you think of college rankings, we know they are a significant factor in choices made by applicants. The U.S. News & World Report’s annual rankings of colleges and universities is the most frequently cited ranking viewed by students applying for admission. It uses alumni giving as one of seven factors in their ranking methodology, accounting for 5% of the total score applied to the ranking.

Alumni giving increases the value of your degree. The prestige of DePauw based on public perception of rankings affect how employers, graduate school admissions, prospective students and parents view the university. The greater the regard for DePauw, the more valuable your degree becomes.

No matter the size, your gift will have an important impact on the alumni giving rate.