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## **Lack of Training Contributes to Scarcity of Qualified Fund Raisers Nationwide**

By Holly Hall

The nationwide shortage of fund raisers who can solicit big gifts points to the lack of training opportunities available to people who aspire to such jobs, say executive recruiters and experienced fund raisers.

"One thing that must happen is more professional education for major-gift officers," says Abbie von Schlegell, a Williamstown, Mass., fund-raising consultant. "There needs to be a much higher level of training."

Many colleges and universities offer master's degrees and certificates in nonprofit management and related topics, including fund raising. But most of those programs focus more on administrative issues than on raising money.

The Institute for Charitable Giving, in Chicago, and the Fund Raising School at Indiana University, in Indianapolis, both offer two- or three-day seminars around the country on topics such as winning large gifts and arranging bequests and other planned gifts. The seminars draw praise but don't come close to meeting the need, experts say.

The Association of Fundraising Professionals, the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy, and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education all offer sessions on different types of fund raising at their conferences, as well as other training in the form of workshops and publications. But critics say those organizations are still not doing enough to meet the growing demand for fund raisers who are qualified to seek big donations from affluent people.

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education is now considering whether to offer training for executives in sales, banking, and other professions whose skills lend themselves to fund raising and who are interested in changing careers. However, the council does not expect to know for several months whether it will move forward with the project.

*counsel in advancement*



## **Wanted: New Certification**

Some fund raisers say professional-certification programs for major-gift and planned-giving officers would be a big step forward. The two existing programs for fund raisers — the Certified Fundraising Executive and the Advanced Certified Fundraising Executive credentials — do not teach the skills and practices necessary to win large gifts from individuals, they say.

"To take them and pass does not train you for any particular job," says Diane M. Carlson, president of 1-2-1 Executive Search, a Las Vegas recruiting firm that works with nonprofit groups. "You have a broad understanding, but you do not really know how to do major gifts or planned giving. What we need are certification programs for these jobs."

At the Association of Fundraising Professionals, officials are considering forming an agreement with an academic institution to offer "a more robust package of speciality credentials, including one for major gifts," says Paulette Maehara, the association's president, but no firm decision has been made as to when it will be available.

Meanwhile, at Columbia University, one academic director has been working for the past two years to make a master's degree in nonprofit management into a program with a heavy concentration in fund raising. (New York University also has a master's degree in fund raising, which includes courses in law and the history of philanthropy.)

Columbia's Master of Science in Fundraising Management now has separate courses on major gifts, capital campaigns, planned giving, and fund-raising research, among others. The degree, unlike most other master's programs, offers students the chance to "major in fund raising and minor in nonprofit administration," says Lucas Rubin, its academic director.

So far, the program has enrolled 80 students, many of them development officers interested in moving into more senior positions. Without any outreach on his part, Mr. Rubin says, he is being contacted by a growing number of recruiters and nonprofit executives. They are interested in hiring his students for jobs such as a recent opening for a director of major gifts at the University of Pennsylvania's New York office.

"We are plowing new ground," Mr. Rubin says. "We are responding to the evolving and growing need of the fund-raising industry."