

Develop and implement a student philanthropy council to establish a culture of student philanthropy, benefiting Fresno State through monetary gifts.

CURRENT CHALLENGE:

The current issue we face on campus, along with other universities across the nation, is the lack of student philanthropy on our campus. Specifically, student philanthropy efforts created and implemented by students.

A 2014 study performed by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) found that more than two-thirds of educational institutions surveyed had a staff working group or a campus organization dedicated to student philanthropy. The study also found that less than 15 percent of those organizations that have advancement professionals in charge of student philanthropy rate their institutions as having a “high” or “very high” degree of success in engaging students. Beyond resources (staff and budget), another frequently cited barrier to the successful implementation and growth of campus-based student philanthropy is that many students believe they have already fulfilled their financial obligation by paying tuition. For institutions with a focus on student philanthropy, a vast majority indicated that collaboration with students on engagement through peer-to-peer networking or student leadership groups yielded significantly higher giving participation rates.

While Fresno State has a strong tradition of student philanthropy in the community, the university will benefit from the development of student philanthropy that has the university as its main focus. In order to be successful in this initiative, it is proposed that the effort must be student driven.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

While there is a need for student philanthropy at Fresno State, the good news is, students at Fresno State are very philanthropic. Examples include:

- Fresno State’s Sigma Chi Fraternity raised \$25,000 for Valley Children’s Hospital last year.
- Fresno State students volunteer their time to support the annual Kid’s Day event, last year raising more than \$43,000.
- During the 2014-15 academic year, 14,910 students, faculty, and staff broke all previous university records by volunteering 1,324,977 hours of community service. These hours equal an estimated economic value of over \$36.4M.

While the student population at Fresno State is actively involved in many philanthropic activities, there is a need to establish a culture of student philanthropy benefiting Fresno State through monetary gifts. A culture of student philanthropy benefiting Fresno State must be developed. Through the development and implementation of a student philanthropy council, opportunities for students to support student causes that directly affect and benefit them and Fresno State can be realized. The next steps to establish a student-led student philanthropy council would be to develop a representative group of students (year in school, academic discipline, cultural and ethnic groups, etc.) through application, nomination, and/or selection. The council would be facilitated by the Fresno State Alumni Association under the Advancement Division. The key to successfully developing a student philanthropy council is the peer to peer influence; a council for students, created by students, supporting students.

BENEFITS TO FRESNO STATE:

The development and implementation of a student-led student philanthropy council is in alignment with President Castro’s first strategic priority: Enhance teaching and learning through innovative practices, programs, and high-impact experiences that contribute to extraordinary learning, the development of the whole student, and life-long success. Specifically the establishment of a student philanthropy council:

- Is an innovative practice
- Would provide a high-impact experience, enabling students to be at the forefront of efforts that would support and lead to student success as it immediately and directly benefits students.
- Would enhance their learning while on campus.
- Lead to life-long success and create a culture of philanthropy at Fresno State beyond their student years

Further, research demonstrates that students who engage in service learning during their time in college experience a positive impact on their personal development including: Personal efficacy, personal identity, spiritual growth and moral development. Further, service learning also has a positive effect on sense of social responsibility, citizenship skills, and commitment to service. Participating in service learning and volunteering of time, talent, and treasure in college is associated with further involvement in community service after graduation. Thus, the implementation of student-led philanthropy can be expected to provide both short-term and long-term benefits to students and Fresno State, extending beyond their tenure as a student, and into their continued involvement as an alumnus/a.