

The Challenge

In 1998 the Alberta Vocational College separated from the provincial government and began to operate as an independent educational institution called Bow Valley College (BVC). The new structure provided many advantages, one of the most important of which was an increased flexibility to meet student and community needs. However, the responsiveness, flexibility and financial independence also created a requirement to raise significant funds from the private sector, which BVC had never done before and was not equipped with the infrastructure or staffing resources to do so.

Objective

The long-term goal of BVC was to build a comprehensive and sustainable fund development program that met future funding requirements and would allow BVC to grow and expand its programming base.

Feasibility Study, Campaign Strategy & Capacity Building

BVC proceeded to create a comprehensive fund development plan with a campaign goal of \$7 million. They successfully secured \$1.3 million in addition to several other major gift requests under consideration by potential donors. The campaign strategy was well designed to support the college's five-year business plan and future direction. A sub-committee of the board was recruited with a high profile campaign cabinet.

When BVC was ready to embark on a capital campaign, they engaged TDG to conduct a campaign feasibility study and recommend a campaign goal and strategy for this project. Over a 10 year period, TDG continued working with BVC to assist with the planning and implementation of a capital campaign.

TDG, in conjunction with the BVC Chief Development Officer, managed the first-ever capital campaign for the College. The *Improving Lives Beyond the Classroom* campaign had a goal of \$10 million. TDG became engaged with the campaign when it had raised \$3 million of that goal.

Methodology

TDG helped BVC with many critical aspects of leading up to and during the campaign, including:

- Solicitation training for fund development volunteers and staff. TDG conducted the "Taking the Fear Out of Big Gift Asking" inter-active workshop;
- Performing a fund development audit;
- Raising their donor base from zero;
- Developing stewardship protocols;
- Building human resource capacity within the fund development department;
- Effectively working with key cabinet volunteers;
- Creating a \$1 million child care initiative;
- Introducing Learn a Better Living™ Breakfasts. The first breakfast raised \$1 million;
- Developing successful prospect identification and solicitation processes;
- Engaging donors who then became solicitors for the campaign; and
- Liaising with the College's executive team so they were fully engaged in the campaign.

Outcomes

The campaign was a stellar success and raised \$13 million, a total of 130% of the original goal, in addition to establishing numerous scholarships, awards and bursaries. BVC was also able to expand the fund development department by recruiting a donor stewardship officer and a special events officer. Senior Counsel from TDG was contracted post-campaign for a one-year term to continue building capacity within the BVC fund development team that began pre-campaign when we conducted an executive search to place the first Director of Development at the institution. BVC now has a dynamic and sustainable development program.

Strong Client Relationships

“The Development Group brings rigor, drive, ethics and vision(s) of what can be achieved through clear thinking, achievable goal setting, and an intrinsic understanding of the philanthropic market. Not only do they demonstrate depth of knowledge and professional accountability, but are able to quickly assess and understand the many cultures within any organization, always with a view to enhance the culture of philanthropy.

If you are looking for a team of professionals who will come in to your organization, assess your strengths and weaknesses, work with you to design a path towards sustainability and at the same time build your reputation within the philanthropic community, I would highly recommend them. They will help you create the pillars you need in order to succeed.”

*Valerie Hoey, MA, CFRE
Acting Vice President, College Advancement, Bow Valley College*