

Memo

To: Class of '72 Executive Committee
From: Tom Hoster '72
cc: Sue Walsh, Chris Olofson '92, Traslyn Butler, Casey Karch, Maribeth Regan
Date: July 7, 2021
Re: Annual Giving Results 2020-21

This is getting boring. It seems that each year I report that the Annual Giving results for the Class of '72 were “outstanding.”

Well, this past year is no exception. I am pleased to report that the Class of '72 has completed another great year in Annual Giving. For the Annual Giving year 2020-21 – our 49th Reunion year – the class gave \$286,330 while achieving a participation rate of 65.2%, with 517 out of 793 classmates participating.

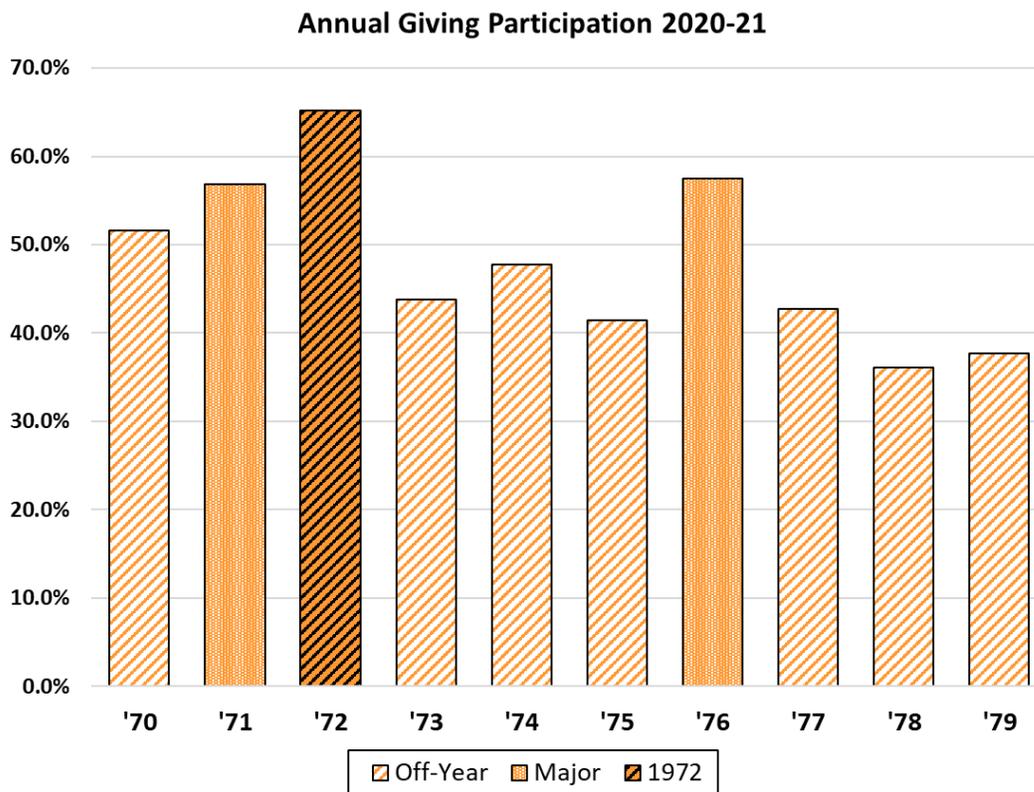
Dollars. At more than \$286,000, our dollar total was pretty typical for an off-year total.

Participation. Our participation rate of 65.1% marks the twenty-third year in a row that the Class of '72 has been above the magic 60% level, a feat that no other class in our decade has come close to achieving.

Our achievements this past year are all the more remarkable when you add some context.

Our Annual Giving participation was 19 percentage points above the average for the other nine classes in our decade of the seventies (which, remember, includes two major-reunion classes). Our participation rate was 65.2%; the average for the other nine classes in our decade was 46.3%.

This graph says it all:



Put into a larger context, we have two more remarkable measures of our achievements:

- The Class of '72 Annual Giving participation rate was the highest of the 50 youngest classes, a cohort that includes ten major-reunion classes.
 - Our participation was more than three percentage points higher than the next-best class in the youngest fifty, which was the 25th-Reunion class.
- Of the 84 Princeton classes with living alumni, the Class of '72 had the seventh-highest participation of all of them.
 - (I'm afraid that the Class of '37 could not be beat; their participation was 100%)

Achieving the best participation of the fifty youngest classes means that we should receive the Class of '31 Trophy on Alumni Day. It will be the second year in a row that this has gone to the Class of '72.



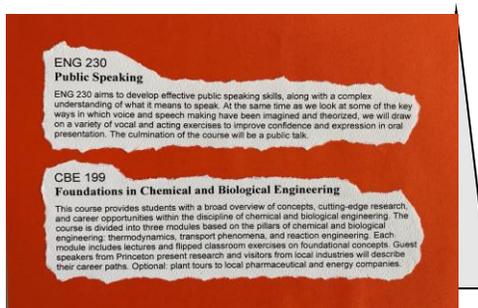
Overall Campaign Results. Overall, the University's Annual Giving participation was challenging – probably a post-Covid hangover. At 49.6%, participation was up modestly from last year, but the \$68.6 million that was raised was the third highest ever. It is gratifying that the Class of '72 can contribute to those numbers the way that we did.

Class of '72 Efforts. Our results would not have been possible without the efforts of more than a dozen classmates who made calls and did their follow-ups: Ron Brown, Daryl English, Marty Franks, Doug Harrison, Bob Hodrick, Barbara Julius, Chris Loomis, Rod McNealy, Merc Morris, Robby Robinson, Rob Smart, Ed Strauss, Tony Tichenor, Bill Watts, and Bob Wright, and that does not include classmates who participated in phonathons. The usual phonathons at the Princeton Club in New York were off the table this year – the Club just reopened – but Robby stepped up an organized “virtual phonathons”, with a number of volunteers making the calls from their homes, same as before, but without the camaraderie and the food. The Class of '72 volunteer team has embraced the philosophy of making solicitations personal, fostering and continuing personal relationships with their chosen classmates. Our outstanding results reflect that.

Our success validates, I believe, our philosophy on solicitations – that we need to make our solicitations more personal, not more numerous. It is a message that I try to deliver to my colleagues on the National Annual Giving Committee. It is tempting – and easy – to hit classmates with a never-ending barrage of Princeton emails and other solicitations; we do not let that happen.

It can be challenging to make emails personal – it is an inherently impersonal medium. In the 208 emails that I sent out in the campaign, I sent them one at a time, putting the classmate's name in the subject line (“One Month Left, Bill!”) or including a unique first line in the body (“I hope that things are good in Vermont”).

This was the sixth year that I have written a personal thank you note to each of our donors – 516 of them this year. For this year's thank-you note, the Annual Giving office printed up notecards for us with the course descriptions of the two courses that the Class of '72 Teaching Initiative Fund supported.



This was my 29th year as Class Agent. It was another challenging year, as a number of classmates declined to give, following the University's renaming of the Woodrow Wilson School and general “Woke-ness”. The volunteers and I were able to convince a few of these folks to give token gifts to support class participation.

Beating 65% participation, especially in an off year, is gratifying. Outstanding participation in Annual Giving can be very hard to sustain – it seems that with every passing year, more classmates grow distant from the University and the Class. Retrieving those classmates and bringing them back into the Annual Giving fold can be a real challenge. But we benefit from a Class leadership that believes that our Annual Giving results are a unifying theme that brings the class together.

Classmates leave, but sometimes they do come back. We had a number of classmates who gave this year who had given fewer than fifteen times since graduation.

In the Annual Giving office at Princeton, Traslyn Butler and her sidekick Casey Karch supplied us with everything we needed to be as productive as possible. Since I started my Class Agent work 34 years ago, I have seen the Annual Giving office transition from mail to fax to the Internet – from printouts to downloads. The AG Office continues to evolve with the times, now fully exploiting the available technology in their mission. That said, the Class of '72 continues to rely heavily on handwritten communications – I personally sent out more than 730 handwritten note cards, including the 516 thank-you notes – and the High Priestess of Printing, Maribeth Regan, never fails to come through for us.

The Class of '72 continues to be in an excellent position to extend our string of successful Annual Giving results as we continue in our fifth decade as alumni and head into our 50th Reunion.

Cheers,

Tom