

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: **UNRAVELING THE MYTHS OF CHINESE AMERICAN GIVING: EXPLORING DONOR MOTIVATIONS AND EFFECTIVE FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES FOR U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION**

Kozue Tsunoda, Doctor of Philosophy, 2011

Directed By: Dr. Jing Lin and Dr. Noah D. Drezner,  
Department of Education Leadership, Higher  
Education, and International Education  
University of Maryland, College Park

Chinese Americans form a growing population of individual philanthropists in U.S. universities and colleges. Despite their continuing contributions to the development of U.S. higher education, the voices of Chinese American donors have not garnered enough scholarly attention. In fact, there still remain hidden “myths” about Chinese American giving: 1) Chinese American donors are “non-traditional”; 2) Chinese American giving is “small, private, and personal”; 3) Chinese American giving differs generationally; and 4) increasing international Chinese student populations in the U.S. will generate positive effects on overall trends in Chinese American giving.

Using interview data from fourteen Chinese American donors who have supported U.S. higher education, this dissertation explores these four “myths” regarding

Chinese American giving to U.S. higher institutions. The findings highlight that the impact of “traditional” and “non-traditional” perspectives regarding donor motivation combines to form a more holistic dynamic of Chinese American donor behaviors. While cultural factors influenced donors in different ways, “traditional” donor motivations did encourage Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education. These included familial obligations, community and institutional reciprocity, and an appreciation for the impact and value of education. In contrast, though, while donors’ motivations could be characterized as “traditional,” the way in which Chinese Americans donated to higher education was decidedly “non-traditional.” Donations described in the study were large, institutionalized, and public, all of which characterize Western patterns of philanthropy, not Chinese.

However, participants in the study were not Chinese; they were Chinese American, and nearly all of them cited the impact of Western culture on their giving practices or their concept of philanthropy. Many elaborated further, referencing their use of skills acquired in capitalist ventures as influencing how they donate funds. In other words, donors acquired and implemented American models of professional philanthropy. Chinese American donors interviewed for this study gave directly to universities and established nonprofit foundations to operate their charitable funds. Others served on university boards, providing strategic advice and assisting with institutional fundraising efforts. While still influenced by traditional concepts of Chinese philanthropy, Chinese American donors have transformed their practices into a new and unique culture of ethnic philanthropic giving.

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DONOR MOTIVATIONS AND EFFECTIVE FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES FOR  
U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION

By

Kozue Tsunoda

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Advisory Committee:  
Professor Jing Lin, Co-Chair  
Professor Noah D. Drezner, Co-Chair  
Professor Alberto F. Cabrera  
Professor Steven J. Klees  
Professor Larry H. Shinagawa

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## Acknowledgements

Philanthropy has not always been a big part of my life. While I was busy as a younger student, my days weren't filled with volunteer activities or charitable giving. It wasn't until I studied in China that I was struck by the scale and impact of philanthropy and so I began to ask more questions about what drives it. Surrounded by buildings and facilities named after donors, I wondered, "Who are these people?" "How does one donate such large sums of money?" "What drives them to give?" This dissertation is dedicated to everyone who helped me get closer to answers to these and many more questions. I would like to acknowledge several people who had significant roles in shaping my work and this dissertation project.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## Problem Statement

Giving by individuals and foundations contributes immeasurable assets to the development of American higher education. As Hall (1992) has stated, “No single force is more responsible for the emergence of the modern university in America than giving by individuals and foundations” (p. 403). Today, a majority of universities house development offices that specifically manage solicitation of private donations. In fact, U.S. universities have prospered so much from fundraising efforts that “the top ten endowed universities have more dollars than the GDP of the 75 poorest nations combined” (Tobin, Solomon, & Karp, 2003, p. 35). Nevertheless, the impact of recent economic turmoil on university fundraising is undeniable. According to a Council for Aid to Education report, in 2009, private contributions to colleges and universities in the U.S. dropped by 11.9%, a nearly \$4 billion decrease from the previous year (CAE, 2010). While fragile fiscal environments negatively impact the net income of traditional donations, soliciting donations from non-traditional donor groups has become increasingly important for American higher education. The recent fiscal environment evokes an urgent need to develop alternative giving channels, and one strategy now being employed by universities is to target growing ethnic minority populations.

Related literature on diversity in fundraising highlights the significance of incorporating cultural traditions and beliefs behind charitable giving into the actual fundraising efforts (Newman, 2002; Pettey, 2002; Scalan & Abraham, 2002). Sanford Cloud Jr., the president and CEO of the National Conference for Community and Justice, stated that diversification is “desirable not only because it is the right thing to do, but also

because doing so will increase the effectiveness of fundraising and charitable organizations” (Wagner & Ryan, 2004, p. 66). Scalan and Abrahams’s (2002) study of minority giving in the U.S. documents that understanding traditional perceptions of different minority giving is a vital step in reaching out to diverse communities and fulfilling future fundraising endeavors. Other research further addresses ways of incorporating cultural traditions into fundraising practices. Primary importance lies in recognizing and serving diverse cultures by learning and experiencing the fundraising practices of these local communities (Newman, 2002). These earlier studies document the importance of diversifying fundraising strategies, particularly by understanding cultural giving behaviors and also recruiting fundraising professionals from minority groups. Nevertheless, the findings from previous studies rely heavily on descriptive data of minority giving and fail to integrate philanthropic theories in the analysis. More significantly, these studies overlook the meaning of diversity from donors’ perspectives. What is missing here is the voice of actual actors involved in philanthropy and fundraising practices.

Today, Chinese Americans constitute the largest ethnic group among Asian Americans, and as more Chinese students and scholars study in the U.S. each year, universities can no longer afford to ignore this growing population. Chinese Americans in this study consists of Chinese immigrants of the mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, and Hong Kong ancestry. In 2008, the estimated number of Chinese Americans in the U.S. totaled 3.6 million, forming the largest Asian ethnicity group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Also, the record shows that China has the second highest number of billionaires in the

world, and a total amount of charitable giving rose from \$1.5 billion in 2006 to \$7.5 billion in 2009 (Jiang, 2010).

Since the start of Chinese immigration in the early nineteenth century, Chinese Americans have had significant impact on and within mainstream U.S. education; gifts to universities in the name of charitable causes have been no exception. Not considering major gifts, one cannot overlook the astounding number of Chinese student immigrants in the U.S. who have become potential donors. According to the Institution of International Education, in the 2009-2010 academic years, the total number of Chinese students from mainland China enrolled in U.S. universities or colleges exceeded 127,628, a 30% increase from the previous year (Open Doors Report, 2010). These Chinese Americans, some of whom have studied at or are currently attending universities in the U.S., have become significant actors for development of U.S. universities. Consequently, there is a need to examine both the underlying motives that engender support by Chinese Americans for U.S. universities as well as the ways in which development offices can better foster and harness philanthropic giving by Chinese Americans.

Until now, no study in the field of philanthropy and fundraising has explored specifically the philanthropic motivations of Chinese Americans nor distinguished the relationships between Chinese American donors and U.S. higher education institutions. Earlier research on donor motivations has highlighted the charitable behavior of “traditional” donors, a research sample primarily composed of White males (Cash, 2005, Curti & Nash, 1965). What is lacking in earlier studies is a closer attention to specific values and norms that cultivate non-traditional donors’ charitable behaviors. In contrast, earlier studies that have examined Asian American giving categorized Asian American

donors as a homogeneous group (Chao, 1999; Ho, 2004; Petty, 2002; Shao, 1995). While these studies have provided significant knowledge and information to understand ethnic minority giving, they have failed to illustrate the diversity among various sub-ethnic groups.

The term “Asian American” refers to U.S. residents of Asian descent. This includes those who are originally from South-east Asian, East Asian, and South Asian regions. Each ethnic group has different immigration histories, religious beliefs, and cultural traditions. Moreover, ethnic identity among Asian Americans varies across generations. First generation and more recently immigrated Asian Americans tend to instill more of the traditional traits from their home country while second generation and beyond Asian Americans tend to have fewer traditional traits to share among themselves and with subsequent generations. These disparities require more critical perceptions regarding philanthropy. Earlier empirical studies of Asian American giving do not integrate philanthropic theory; rather, they are atheoretical while prior theoretical studies fail to examine non-White philanthropy. Further research on Chinese American students, alumni, and donors will explicitly disclose the information necessary for cultivating ethnicity-specific university fundraising strategies.

## **Purpose and Overview of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the philanthropic motivations behind Chinese American giving to American higher education. Defining giving as monetary supports for charitable causes, this study will explore:

*Why and how do Chinese Americans give to U.S. higher education?*

The overarching goal of this study is to understand the narrative underlying Chinese American donors' decisions to support American higher education. Specifically, I will address the following questions:

- How do Chinese American donors learn about philanthropy?
- Why do they support higher education specifically?
- How do they support U.S. higher education?
- How do gifts to American higher education relate to individual cultural and historical orientations?
- How do donors perceive philanthropy in the Chinese American community?
- How can universities utilize the knowledge of Chinese American donor behaviors to cultivate a better rapport with this particular population?

Chapter Two introduces theoretical frameworks developed for this study. The theory for this study comprises a meta-analysis of previous literature on the history of philanthropy and fundraising in U.S. higher education, including “traditional” and “non-traditional” donor motivation theories. This framework links two dimensions:

- 1) History of philanthropy in U.S. higher education and individual levels that focus on “traditional” donor motivation
- 2) A macro-oriented level that takes into account the influence of socio-historical and socio-cultural factors related to “non-traditional” Chinese American giving

By synthesizing these two dimensions, my study attempts to advance the previous studies of donor motivation theory and Chinese American giving. A review of earlier studies proposes a theoretical framework useful for a subsequent analysis of Chinese American giving in American higher education. This framework embeds philanthropic motivations in seven themes: donor altruism, personal benefits, psychological benefits, reciprocity, attachment, giving capacity, and culture.

As further explained in Chapter Three, the data for this study includes in-depth interviews with 14 Chinese American donors who have supported U.S. higher education.

Chapter Four further summarizes demographic and philanthropic characteristics of these individual participants. Additionally, this chapter describes specific patterns of Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education. Chapter Five is the core chapter of this dissertation research, examining philanthropic motivations of Chinese Americans to support U.S. higher education. The analysis reflects the seven theoretical themes developed in Chapter Two. Chapter Six presents donor perceptions of philanthropy in the Chinese American community, further exploring donors' voices regarding perceptions of "private, personal, and small" patterns of Chinese American giving (Koehn & Yin, 2002), effective fundraising strategies targeting Chinese American donors, and the impact of growing international Chinese students in U.S. higher education to Chinese American philanthropy.

Based on the previous discussions, Chapter Seven discusses four predominant myths about Chinese American philanthropy. These myths are constructed from earlier literature discussing Chinese and Asian American giving not exclusive to higher education.

*Myth 1: Chinese American donors are "non-traditional."*

Empirical studies of donor motivation theories focused on "traditional" White male donors. This section explores how "traditional" explanations of donor motivations in the forms of altruism, personal benefits, psychological benefits, reciprocity, attachment, and giving capacity apply to the cases of Chinese American donors. Also included is an investigation of the influence of Confucian teachings in Chinese American giving, specifically examining the concepts of benevolence, a belief in education, filial piety, self-effacement, and righteousness.

*Myth 2: Chinese American giving is “small, private, and personal.”*

Earlier studies have characterized Chinese American giving as private, personal, and small as opposed to Western charitable giving practices, which are often public, professional, large, and independent (Koehn & Yin, 2002). This section reveals emerging characteristics of Chinese American giving by exploring the voices of Chinese American donors and revisiting Chinese American gift patterns to U.S. higher education.

*Myth 3: Generational differences exist in Chinese American giving.*

Earlier studies stated that first generation Asian Americans give exclusively to ethnic-specific causes both in the U.S. and their home country or regions while second generation and beyond are more likely to support causes in the mainstream U.S. (Chao, 1999). This section reveals how generational factors shape distinct patterns of giving to universities and colleges among Chinese Americans.

*Myth 4: Recent increases in international Chinese student populations have positive impacts on Chinese American philanthropy.*

The myth discusses perceived positive impacts of a growing international Chinese student population on Chinese American philanthropy, proposing that as the number of Chinese student immigrants grows, philanthropic giving among Chinese Americans will similarly increase. This section examines the adequacy of this explanation from donors' points of view.

The overall goal of this study is to reveal the voices of Chinese American donors. By interpreting data and distilling culture and beliefs behind Chinese American giving, I attempt to reveal the giving patterns and philanthropic motivations of Chinese American donors to support universities and colleges in the U.S. The assumption is that there are misconceptions between Chinese American donors and university development offices.

My preliminary research with development officers about Asian American giving has revealed that a majority of universities do not have specific strategies or policies to solicit gifts from Asian American donors (Tsunoda, 2010). While development officers recognize the need and importance of incorporating diversity into university fundraising, the reality prevails that solicitation of non-traditional, Asian American donors only occurs within larger university campaign efforts, largely ignoring the philanthropic potential of these communities.

This study suggests that higher education institutions should be aware that their current solicitation practices are by no means exhaustive. There is a need to explore solicitation strategies that best appeal to the historical and cultural contexts aligned with Chinese American beliefs in philanthropy.

### **Significance and Potential Contributions**

The significance of this study is not only to provide substantial and meaningful information about Chinese American educational giving, but also to better understand the cultures and beliefs that motivate Chinese Americans to support higher education in the U.S. My preliminary study reveals that most universities fail to track their donations by donor ethnicity. Also, until now, no scholarly research has examined philanthropic motivations of Chinese American educational giving, nor have they explored a critical narrative of Chinese American donors. My study is an attempt to synthesize the field of knowledge regarding Chinese American giving with the more commonly studied fields of diversity in fundraising, alumni giving, and theories of donor motivations. By exploring

Chinese American giving in an interdisciplinary fashion, the study attempts to provide a new perspective to address the gap in academic knowledge.

Consequently, the findings of this study will benefit U.S. universities by helping them improve relationships with Chinese American donors. Also, documentation of traditional and contemporary practices of Chinese American philanthropy is necessary to fill a crucial gap in the emerging discourse on cultural awareness and philanthropy within research and practitioner communities. All in all, the result of this study will inform domestic and international university efforts to cultivate stronger rapport with donors from minority ethnic backgrounds.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The theoretical framework of this research draws upon three central pillars: 1) historical concepts of philanthropy in American higher education; 2) theories of “traditional” donor motivations; and 3) cultural and historical concepts of Chinese American giving. The first section presents the historical contexts of philanthropy in American higher education. Beginning with the establishment of Harvard College in the late nineteenth century, the study documents the changing trends of collegiate philanthropy in America. The second section discusses current theories of “traditional” donor motivations. In particular, this section identifies the dominant theoretical explanations of “traditional” White donor motivations. The third section highlights the historical and cultural contexts of Chinese American giving. The section begins with a historical overview of Chinese American giving and continues to a discussion of Chinese American patterns of giving and their philanthropic motivations as evidenced in the literature. The emphasis of Confucian cultural values in Chinese American giving and how Confucian teachings advocate philanthropic behaviors in different manners are explored in this section. By reviewing the previous literature on philanthropy in American higher education, theories of “traditional” donor motivations, and historical and cultural contexts of Chinese American giving, this chapter attempts to conceptualize a theoretical framework used in the subsequent analysis of Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education.

## **Historical Contexts of Giving in U.S. Higher Education**

While the primary emphasis of this study is on Chinese America giving, understanding historical contexts of philanthropy in American higher education sets a contextual framework for exploring Chinese American donor behaviors. The tradition of philanthropy has been a central part of American higher education since the establishment of Harvard College. In 1633, English clergyman John Harvard bequeathed half of his estate to establish the first college in the U.S. During the seventeenth century, most benefactors pledged unconditional gifts primarily to promote traditional collegiate learning of Oxford and Cambridge models (Curti & Nash, 1965). One example of this includes religious connotations of earlier gifts. For instance, in the early eighteenth century, English merchant Thomas Hollis pledged a professorship of dignity at the Harvard College. The purpose of his gift was to promote religious liberation, specifically to celebrate a furtherance of Christianity. Another major benefactor of this era was Welsh merchant Elihu Yale. In 1718, he established Yale College with his gift of the proceeds from the sale of goods; 417 books and a portrait of King George I (Yale University, 2010). Between the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, several colleges emerged on the East Coast, including the College of William and Mary founded in 1693, the Collegiate School of Connecticut in 1701, and the College of New Jersey in 1746. These colleges solicited donations from individuals or small families who favored a departure from traditional colonial colleges.

The nineteenth century was a turning point in collegiate philanthropy. With the rapid growth of industrial wealth emerged “bourgeois culture” celebrating middle-class values and ideals (as cited in Cash, 2005, p. 617). Consequently, the social and political

forces celebrated more utilitarian and practical higher education systems through strengthening the fields of science, technology, agriculture, and commerce. Viewing higher education as an economic advancement tool, many elite businessmen and industrialists of the community provided large-scale gifts to higher education (Cash, 2005). These major gifts include John Rockefeller's million-dollar-gift in 1898 for an establishment of the College of Commerce and Administration at the University of Chicago and William J. Walker's multiple-thousand-dollar gift in 1865 for an advancement of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. These gifts facilitated an expansion of vocational training and instruction among American colleges and universities. Since the mid-nineteenth century, many major universities opened in response to societal demands for an "American university," one that is wholly independent from the influence of great universities in Europe (Curti & Nash, 1965, p. 109). Universities such as Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Cornell, and Vanderbilt were built around this time. Although alumni fundraising flourished during the twentieth century, the nineteenth century saw the establishment of two early alumni associations. In 1820, the Society of Alumni at Williams College became the first alumni association to professionally solicit funds from alumni. About ten years later, Princeton University launched its first Capital Campaign (Miller, 1993).

During the twentieth century, American higher education employed more professional and systematic fundraising efforts. First and foremost, philanthropic foundations emerged in response to the requirements of six or seven digit mega-gifts (Curti & Nash, 1965). These foundations functioned independently to allocate the surplus welfare of individual philanthropists. The most influential philanthropic

foundations of the time include the Rockefeller and Carnegie foundations. As Hollis (1940) stated, these foundations manifested “ideas and institutions that are usually considered close to the growing age of the culture” (p. 178). Additionally, fundraising professionals were introduced to manage gift operations. In 1919, Harvard University employed the fundraising firm John Price Jones to manage its 15 million dollar gifts to the endowment campaign (Cutlip, 1965). After World War II, universities and colleges recruited internal development officers to oversee gift management and to raise funds from other alumni and patrons (Drezner, 2008; Worth, 2002). With greater emphasis on satisfying the emerging societal needs of the time, American higher education has gradually transformed its role to today’s center of research and advanced studies.

An overall review of historical development of philanthropy in American higher education reveals the invisibility of non-traditional donors, an incomplete history missing the support and contributions of those who are non-White wealthy males. Such a historical gap justifies the significance of examining the role of undocumented non-traditional donors in the development of American higher education. Especially when fragile fiscal environments negatively impact the net income of these traditional donations, soliciting donations from diverse donor groups has become increasingly significant for American higher education. Building upon these philanthropic traditions in American context, the following section examines the socio-historical and socio-cultural factors related to Chinese American giving.

## **Theories of “Traditional” Donor Motivations**

This section examines the current theories of philanthropic motivations among “traditional” donors, a sample which consists primarily of White males. Donor motivation has been explored considerably across interdisciplinary areas. A review of earlier studies proposes a theoretical framework useful for a subsequent analysis of Chinese American giving in American higher education. Specifically, this framework embeds philanthropic motivations in six themes: donor altruism, personal benefits, psychological benefits, reciprocity, attachment, and giving capacity.

### **Purely Altruistic Motivation or “Selflessness” in Giving**

Earlier studies argue that charitable behaviors arise from a subject’s purely altruistic motivation or “selflessness.” The following section introduces one of the dominant models in the field of economy, the pure altruism model.

#### *Pure Altruism Model*

The pure altruism model assumes that the altruistic motivation of donors will increase the provision of goods for others (Roberts, 1984; Warr, 1982). The key component of this model is “selflessness,” a notion of active benevolence without any internal or external rewards. Pure altruism, as defined by Roberts (1984) entails “the case where the level of consumption of one individual enters the utility function of the other” (p. 137). Roberts’ definition does not assume any alternative motivations; simply put, individuals donate resources for the collective interest without any anticipation of their own preferences. That is, donors’ self-interest does not empower giving behaviors,

but rather the notion of selflessness functions as an impetus for a charitable act of giving. In short, pure altruists benefit solely from distributing public goods for others; consequently, they benefit from the gift of others through increased supply of public goods. Here, the level of contribution is unconditional; donors' income disparity does not affect the level of charitable contributions. Both wealthy and poor oblige to share their wealth to advance the quality of others' lives.

Pure altruistic donors manifest a strong desire to perceive the effects of their individual contributions. For pure altruists, seeing the effects of their gift in the form of increased public goods is by far the strongest motivator of charitable giving. Therefore, an increase of private support by other individual donors or government decreases the shared, relative responsibility for positive outcomes. When altruists find others contribute more to a cause, their altruistic motivation declines and their level of contribution decreases accordingly. Similarly, government contributions to privately funded public goods would "crowd-out" private contributions at a "dollar-for-dollar" ratio (Bergstrom, Blume, & Varian, 1986, p. 41). In other words, for every dollar invested by government organizations and entities on behalf of a charitable cause, private contributions would drop by a dollar. A sample case demonstrating this phenomenon was observed at the beginning of the mid-1930s when the U.S. government began to intervene in charitable activities (Roberts, 1984). This government intervention discouraged individual altruists, and, consequently, the government had to supplement donations even further in response to the decreased donations from private contributors.

All in all, seeing the impact of giving in the form of increased goods for others is by far the central motivator of purely altruistic donors. However, critiques of this pure

altruistic model argue that pure altruism is not possible, that donors embrace additional internal and external rewards. The proceeding sections further illustrate these donor behaviors emphasizing self-benefits.

### **Donor Motivation to Maximize Personal Benefits**

In contrast to the aforementioned purely altruistic motivation of giving, theorists argue regarding the personal benefits of giving. This section reviews two theories within this model, namely impure altruism theory and impact theory.

#### *Impure Altruism Model*

Impure altruism describes a notion of “self” in donor behaviors; donors give primarily to maximize their personal benefits (Andreoni, 1988, 1989, 1990, 2008). The impure altruism model reveals additional self-interest motivations of donors, including tax incentives, social approval, and the establishment of new networks. The notion of selflessness in donor behaviors contradicts with altruists’ motivations of selflessness. Because donors give for personal benefits, the present model is impurely altruistic. In this context, impure altruists benefit from government intervention in private giving. Impure altruists enjoy the added social recognition and societal validation they receive from government sanctioning of their donor activities. They believe that government intervention via tax deduction legitimizes the value and the significance of their acts of giving.

### *Impact Philanthropy Theory*

The impact model suggests that multiple motivations may exist in systems simultaneously; that donors give not only because of their pure altruism in advancing the lives of others, but also to receive utility from making changes (Duncan, 2004). While pure altruists give to maximize goods for others and personal satisfaction drives private consumption philanthropists, impact philanthropists contribute to increase the output of a charitable good and possess an extreme desire to “make a difference” (Duncan, 2004, p. 2159).

Generally, donors’ incentives directly correlate to successful increases in the availability of public goods. The more donors perceive the positive effects of their gifts to charitable causes, the more their philanthropic motivation escalates. When a donor feels other contributors have a greater impact on aggregate provision of public goods, their satisfaction from giving declines. For example, African American donors may give a gift to a university to increase educational opportunities among African American students. In this case, an increase in African American enrollments or institutional efforts to support African American students would satisfy the desire of donors and consequently lead to additional contributions. However, government spending for charitable causes stimulates individual donations. This is because government support to a privately funded public good justifies the significance of one’s philanthropic activities. The impact philanthropy model also describes a unique donor-recipient relationship. When impact philanthropists finance a single charitable good without any government support, a “codependent” relationship occurs between donor and recipient, discouraging the recipient from becoming self-sufficient (p. 2163). It is this recipient dependence that

sustains donor relationships. Any factor that denies the need for a donor's contribution—such as an increase in a recipient's income—discourages donors to give.

Duncan (2004) posits that when multiple impact philanthropists support one charitable cause, the total contribution conversely decreases. In the case of a group of philanthropists giving to several goods, each individual contribution increases and consequently expands the aggregate donation. Such cooperation requires donor agreement regarding the amount of gifts and the destination of giving. In this sense, Duncan (2004) notes that the impact philanthropy model explains the frequent conflicts between charitable organizations and donors: an organizational desire to maximize the total impact often conflicts with the motivation of impact philanthropists who seek additional personal benefits.

### **Positive Psychological Beliefs in Giving**

Psychologists provide alternative frameworks by which to consider donor motivations. Overall, these theories emphasize donors' personal belief systems, and psychological research has revealed that donors tend to have positive feelings and beliefs about acts of giving. The following section highlights five models: (1) donating behavior model, (2) model of personal donorship, (3) theory of reasoned action, (4) theory of planned behavior, and (5) theory of prosocial behavior.

#### *Donating Behavior Model*

The donating behavior model which originated within the health care system, states that charitable giving reflects donors' belief in a cause; people give when they

perceive the importance of a cause (Rosenblatt, Cuson, & McGown, 1986). The model characterizes the importance of giving in terms of four factors, including involvement and perceived risk, perceived possibility of the alleviation of the cause, perceived severity of the cause, perceived predominance or the visibility of the cause, and perceived importance of giving. Rosenblatt, Cuson, and McGown (1986) apply the donating behavior model to predict charitable supports of health-related causes. The result shows that those who feel strongly about the importance of giving are more likely to give. For instance, family members of cancer patients would support research on cancer as they are more familiar with the risk and severity of the situation.

#### *Model of Personal Donorship*

Mount's (1996) model of personal donorship advances the donating behavior model beyond the medical spectrum. Specifically, the model predicts donors' psychological rewards from an act of giving. Using data collected from an alumni survey of 242 donors and 75 non-donors in a Canadian public university, Mount (1996) examines five determinants for the level of contributions: 1) the concept of involvement, 2) predominance of a cause, 3) self-interest, 4) prospect's means to give, and 5) past giving behavior. The result shows that among other things, the concept of involvement or an anticipation of psychological rewards, the so called "joy of giving," revealed a significant impact on one's charitable contributions. Predominance of a cause, redefined by Mount (1996) as "a subjective measure of the degree to which a cause stands out in an individual's personal hierarchy or philanthropic options," also shows a positive impact (p. 10). While the model revealed not much influence from the tax incentives, donors' self-interest plays a significant role in determining the levels of donation. Additionally, a

prospect's potential ability to give and their past behavior affects donor behaviors.

Overall, donors tend to have higher family incomes, to have graduated earlier, to be older, male, and to be task-oriented (Mount, 1996). The destination of giving closely relates to personal values, while the quest for psychological reward or acknowledgement determined the level of contributions. These findings cultivate the central concepts of the theory of reasoned action.

### *Theory of Reasoned Action*

The theory of reasoned action posits that personal beliefs in the consequence of giving help develop charitable decisions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Pomazal & Jaccard, 1976). Pomazal and his colleague (1976) examined 270 samples to examine blood donation behavior among college students. Findings showed that one's attitude toward blood donation significantly predicted one's intention for donating blood. While negative perceptions to blood donation discourage one's intention to give, positive perceptions stimulate donors' intention. Traditional altruistic variables such as dependency, social responsibility and guilt also influence a person's intention to help. Individual donors recognize their societal responsibility to give. If they fail to respond to these obligations, then individuals cultivate a feeling of guilt for a lack of engagement. Notably, these explain variables affecting the subjects' decision or their intention to act, but not necessarily their actual helping behavior.

### *Theory of Planned Behavior*

Based upon the central concept of the theory of reasoned action, the theory of planned behavior additionally considers perceived behavioral control over donation procedures (Ajzen, 1991; Smith & MacSweeney, 2007). More specifically, this theory highlights donors' intentions to engage in philanthropic activities. In the words of Smith and McSweeney (2007), "behavioral decisions are not made spontaneously, but are the result of a reasoned process in which behavior is influenced, albeit indirectly, by attitudes, norms and perceptions of control over the behavior" (p. 365). Before making a charitable decision, donors rationalize multiple factors, including norms, social pressure; one's giving ability, and individual attitudes. According to the theory of planned behavior, individual intentions motivate an individual's giving behaviors. In other words, the more that individual intends to engage in a given behavior, the more likely that they perform charitable giving.

More recently, Smith and McSweeney's study (2007) uses the revised theory of planned behavior model to examine the influence of psychological factors on donating intentions and behaviors. This study introduced additional normative components, including injunctive social norms which reflected the significant other's perceptions toward a donor's behavior, subjective norms which indicated a social pressure from significant others, and the descriptive norms which implied the perception of whether others should perform the behavior, as well as a variable of past charitable behavior (Smith & McSweeney, 2007, p. 365). The results from this study show that those who had positive attitudes toward the behavior and those who felt a strong social pressure and moral obligations are more likely to have an intention to participate in charitable giving.

Furthermore, past charitable behavior shows a stronger indicator of donating intention while demonstrating a weaker influence on actual charitable behavior.

### *Theory of Prosocial Behavior*

Theory of prosocial behavior, from the field of psychology, provides another perspective for understanding donor motivations. The model posits that donors contribute more to a cause when they find an urgent need or value among those who share personal or cultural norms (Diamond & Kashyap, 1997; Hogg, 1987; Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981; Schwartz & Ben-David, 1976). Diamond and Kashyap (1997) provide an extensive overview of the literature on prosocial behavior by examining the theoretical applications of the present model on alumni contributions in a state university. A review of earlier literature reveals three determinant factors of prosocial behavior: 1) group size; 2) “we-ness” or individual attachment to a group; and 3) cohesiveness. The studies show that increasing group size would cause a “diffusion of responsibility” among the prospects which decreases the personal obligation to give (as cited in Diamond & Kashyap, 1997, p. 915). Also, a stronger communal and individual attachment to a group escalates the reciprocal altruistic patterns of giving (Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981). Furthermore, cohesiveness, as described by Hogg (1987) as the “common fate, common values and attitudes, and liking for group members” strongly motivated charitable donations (as cited in Diamond & Kashyap, 1997, p. 916). Following Schwartz’s (1977) study, Diamond and Kashyap (1997) also state that charitable obligations result from perceived efficacy and perceived need.

## **Reciprocal Motivation of Giving**

Reciprocity theory and social exchange theory describe the reciprocal motivation of giving; donors give from their desire to receive reciprocative gifts.

### *Reciprocity Theory*

Sugden's (1984) reciprocity theory challenges the purely altruistic donor behaviors. He argues that pure altruism is incomplete because of a "free-rider" problem: the idea that people demand more of public goods without making any charitable contributions. Rather, the reciprocity theory claims a reciprocal relationship between donors and recipients. Within the reciprocity framework, receiving a gift generates a moral obligation to reciprocate when later asked. For instance, a person would voluntarily donate blood with an expectation that others would do the same, and consequently blood would be available in times of need (Anheier & List, 2005). Moreover, Sugden (1984) assumes the production of public goods as a collective responsibility. People believe that if everyone else contributes to a public good, they should do the same to fulfill social obligations. Here, the amount of obligation is strictly independent from one's socio-economic status; wealthy people do not necessarily contribute more than the poor. Rather, the reciprocal return is expected to be equivalent to the benefits they have received. According to Goulder (1960), there are two norms for reciprocity: 1) either parties exchange equivalent values of different goods or 2) they trade necessary alike or identical forms of goods and/or services (p. 172). All in all, when one party benefits from the other, the reciprocal relationship generates an obligation for others to give back the favor they have received.

### *Social Exchange Theory*

Social exchange theory suggests that donors give not only because of their purely altruistic desire to advance the lives of others but also to receive personal benefits in return for their individual contributions (Blau, 1992; Cook & Lasher, 1996; Hollander, 1990; Simon & Ernst, 1996). The concept of social exchange theory differs from an economic exchange in the way that the former entails “unspecified obligations” (Blau, 1992, p. 91). This unspecified obligation inclines the reciprocal transaction between a giver and a recipient: a giver’s reward evokes a recipient’s obligation to return a favor. For instance, donors may give to a university with the condition of sending their children to a particular school. Typically, such transactions evolve slowly at a minimum cost and gradually develop into cohesive relationships. The initial process of developing such a relationship involves offering a favor and making investments that urge commitments from the other party. This requires trusting others to reciprocate through the promotion of a trustworthy image.

Under the social exchange theory, donors and recipients maintain an equal relationship. Thus, exceeding the amount of returns from a recipient invites further transactions, while the failure to reciprocate further increases the contributor’s superiority (Blau, 1992). As noted above, individuals desire to maximize benefits out of the smallest cost. This frequently causes conflict among contributors over the level of contributions. In some case, individuals experience intrapersonal conflict between their personal willingness to gain social approval and their desire to gain instrumental advantage in social associations (Blau, 1992). As Hollander (1990) notes, social exchange is a “simple

axiomatic model” in which “cooperative behavior is motivated by the expectation of emotionally prompted social approval and explores some of its implications” (p. 1157).

Several scholars apply social exchange theory to the context of donor behaviors (Cook & Lasher, 1996; Hollander, 1990; Simon & Ernst, 1996). Hollander (1990) presents a new model of social exchange in individual support for public goods. The model illustrates an interrelation between individual levels of contribution and the amount of societal approval. As individuals contribute more to public goods, they expect ever-increasing approval from society. Likewise, societal approval should reflect the size of individual contributions. Under the present model, donors expect to receive rewards via equivalent amounts of social approval (as cited in Simon & Ernest, 1996).

Additionally, the social exchange theory entails alumni’s desire for a reciprocal relationship. The act of giving initiates from either the university or the donor. On one side, alumni give in response to their collegiate experiences. Using data of alumni survey from Freed-Hardman University (FHU), Thomas and Smart (1995) examine how collegiate extracurricular activities and institutional contributions to personal growth encouraged alumni’s level of contributions. The findings from an OLS regression analysis show a high correlation between one’s positive feelings and involvement in college and overall giving behaviors. Those who actively participate in academic, social, and leadership activities during college are more likely to give back to their alma mater. More recent studies also support these findings, suggesting a significant influence from a sense of belongingness and academic satisfaction on overall actual alumni giving (Gaier, 2005, Gallo & Hubschman, 2003; Hoyt, 2004). According to Clotfelter (2003), students’ academic satisfaction highly correlates with mentoring, whether or not students had a

person who would care about them throughout the college life. Notably, recipients of scholarships or financial aid during their schools years are more likely to give while those with student loans engage less in alumni giving (Marr, Mullin, & Siegfried, 2005; Monk, 2003). In other words, while financial debt discourages loan-recipients to give, those who receive scholarships share a sense of obligation to give back the favor that they received during college.

Other studies tie the quality of faculty and instruction with alumni behaviors. Variables such as student-faculty ratio, commitment of faculty in teaching, and quality of instruction in major courses all encouraged alumni giving and support (Clotfelter, 2003; Cunningham & Cochi-Ficano, 2002; Gaier, 2005; Monks, 2003). Notably, these findings contradict with an earlier study by Monks (2003), who suggests that dissatisfaction with the teaching and educational environment in college indeed generates alumni's motivation to give to their alma mater.

On the other hand, alumni give for social benefits. When a prospect perceives a social benefit in the relationship, they decide to make a gift to the university. In this context, institutional prestige is an essential factor in alumni giving. Baade and Sundberg's (1996) study uses a log-linear regression analysis to examine a correlation between institutional quality and alumni contributions. The variables of institutional quality include the institution selectivity, the student academic performances in high school, the learning spaces, and the instructional expenditure per students. The results show that institutional qualities positively correlate with alumni behaviors. Interestingly, the higher level of institutional quality promotes a greater emphasis on institutional fundraising efforts, both of which significantly increased the level of alumni contribution.

This result is in accordance with Leslie and Ramey's (1988) study, which shows a high correlation between institutional prestige and alumni giving behaviors. Later in 2002, Cunningham's theoretical model states additional indicators of institutional quality, including the institute's academic reputation, students' academic performance, the faculty-student ratio and the career choices of graduate students.

### **Personal Attachment to Charitable Causes**

Individual attachments to charitable causes explain another motivation for charitable giving. Donors give when they identify themselves in the cause, whether to their alma mater or to the community they affiliate with. The donor attachment draws three theoretical perspectives, which are expectancy theory, the investment model, and the identification model.

#### *Expectancy Theory*

Originally developed by Vroom (1964) to explain employee motivation, the expectancy theory describes alumni's expectation to their alma mater (Diamond & Kashyap, 1997; Weerts & Ronca, 2007). Alumni give because they believe in the future directions of the university; they consider that universities will not be able to accomplish this goal without their gifts. Indeed, Diamond and Kashyap's (1997) study of the state university's survey of 246 alumni reveals perceived efficacy and perceived need as the strongest determinants of charitable giving. Notably, attendance at alumni reunions does not initiate monetary contribution, but it significantly predicts one's involvement with an alumni association. This finding remains consistent with more recent studies that

demonstrate a link between alumni giving behaviors and perceived institutional needs for financial support (Taylor & Martin, 1995; Weerts & Ronca, 2009).

University fundraising articulates why institutions need monetary support. Earlier studies suggest multiple results about the influence of fundraising strategies on alumni giving. Some studies argue that solicitation efforts positively associate with overall alumni giving (Baade & Sundberg, 1996; Harrison, Michell, & Peterson, 1995; Leslie & Ramey, 1988). Notably, the study by Harrison, Michell, and Peterson (1995) reveals that institutional expenditures on alumni relationship are the most significant predictor of alumni giving. These studies emphasize that donors cherish institutional recognition in the forms of receiving complementary tickets to athletic tournaments, naming a scholarship or building after them, and publication of contributions. Nevertheless, other studies show contradictory results suggesting a minimum effect of development efforts on alumni giving (Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995; Hoyt, 2004; Weerts & Ronca, 2007). Specifically, institutional solicitation efforts inversely correlate with the extent of volunteerism at one's alma mater (Weerts & Ronca, 2007).

### *Investment Model*

The investment model highlights the importance of alumni-institutional relationship in predicting the level of alumni contributions (Harrison, Michell, & Peterson, 1995; Hunter, Jones, & Boger, 1999; Okunade, Wunnava, & Walsh, 1994; Taylor & Martin, 1995). The investment model in the context of alumni giving entails three components, including 1) satisfaction with the relationship, 2) investment in the relationship, and 3) comparison with other alternative relationships (Weerts & Ronca, 2007). For instance, Hunter, Jones, & Boger's (1999) study shows that alumni's

motivation is derived from emotional attachment to their alma maters and their desire to give something back. Other studies also demonstrate that alumni's volunteering experiences at their alma mater generate subsequent support of their alma mater (Taylor & Martin, 1995; Weerts & Ronca, 2007). Alumni's volunteer experiences are multi-dimensional, ranging from serving on boards and facilitating alumni events to mentoring young alumni, participating in special events, and recruiting students (Weerts, Cabrera, & Stanford, 2010). Overall, the extent to which prospects invested in alumni relationships determined the level of gift provided.

### *Identification Model*

The identification model assumes donors' sense of self-identification: making a gift when they identify emotional attachment to a cause (Jackson, Bachmeier, & Martin, 1994; Schervish & Havens, 1997). According to Schervish and Havens (1997), self-identification implies "the factors inducing the identification of self with the needs and aspirations of others" (p. 236).

Schervish and his colleague argue that what altruists claim to be selfless acts actually incorporate a form of egoism, one that is intertwined in a mutual self-interest. Specifically, charitable giving reflects the sense of "we-ness" or "the sense of being connected with another" (Jackson, Bachmeier, & Martin, 1995, p. 74). This sense of "we-ness" or connectedness brings giver and recipient together and forms a caring relationship based on person-to-person interaction.

Donors contribute when they identify themselves in the personal, professional, and associational settings. Martin (1994) states, "at its best, philanthropy unites individuals in caring relationships that enrich giver and receiver alike" (p. 1). He also

discusses that philanthropy is “connected with family, friends, and other face-to-face interactions” and further creates “new personal relationships” (Martin, 1994, p. 24). As I will explain further in the later section, alumni perceive giving as a way to maintain their connections with their alma mater. Similarly for bereaved family members of an alumna/e, philanthropy honors the legacy of loved ones.

In their analysis of giving behaviors at the household level, Schevish and Havens (1997) introduce an additional determinant factor of charitable giving: urgency/effectiveness. Results show that general giving behaviors strongly correlate with a subject’s community involvement rather than their youthful experiences, frameworks of consciousness, or urgency/effectiveness. Within personal communal commitments, those who affiliate with religious organizations or any other related activities show stronger incentives to make charitable contributions.

Identification theorists tie donor motivations with a subject’s communal involvement. Community refers to “any group of people joined by shared caring; both reciprocal caring in which they care about the well-being of members of the group, and of caring for the same activities, goals, or ideals” (Martin, 1994, p. 26). In his pursuit of virtuous giving, Martin (1994) identifies six features of fully desirable communities. First among these, desirable communities generate reciprocal relationships. Under Martin’s definition, a donor may make a gift to a complete stranger, but that donor would expect some reward in return for that gift. Additionally, fully desirable communities despise any type of unfair discrimination. The community values equal rights to participate in and benefit from political societies, regardless of subjects’ age, sex, religious beliefs, nationality, race/ethnicity, educational attainment levels, and family

backgrounds. The membership of the community is open to anyone in the society who values its practices, traditions, ideas, and norms. Hence, community members cherish a widespread appreciation of the community and strongly support communities' future possibilities.

Activities in desirable communities are significantly valuable, and social cooperation within a community is vital for pursuing every endeavor. All community members share a common social trust and faith between each other. Finally, desirable communities initiate private charity through open discourse about moral issues.

### **Donors' Socio-Economic Capacity for Giving**

Previous research demonstrates that alumni behaviors link to donor capacity, age, and life-cycle hypotheses as well as demographic characteristics of alumni.

#### *Age and Life-Cycle Hypothesis*

The primary indicator of capacity is the amount of individual wealth. One framework that links individual wealth with philanthropic contribution is the life-cycle hypothesis. The hypothesis explains that as individuals' age increases, their spending expands (Clotfelter, 2003; Monk, 2003; Olsen, Smith, & Walsh, 1989; Sean, 2009; Weerts & Ronca, 2009). From the OLS regression analysis of alumni surveys collected from a liberal arts college, Olsen and her colleagues (1989) showed that the life-cycle hypothesis predicted the level of alumni contributions. Weerts and Ronca's (2009) study of a large-scale alumni survey further supports this claim, suggesting a household income of \$90,000 as the cut-off point of smaller (\$50 or less) and larger gifts (\$500 or more).

Specifically, the life-cycle hypothesis factors four sub-variables, including age, marital status, number of children, and employment status. In general, the level of charitable contributions expanded as the donor's age increased (Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995; Okunade, Wunnava, & Walsh, 1994). For instance, Okunade and his colleagues' (1994) study of 303 randomly selected undergraduate samples tested the hypothesis of age-donation profile at a metropolitan public university. The result show that alumni giving grew steadily throughout a life span until the donor reached a retirement age, with the age of 52 as a cut-off point.

#### *Demographic Characteristics*

Though not a primary determinant factor, other demographic characteristics correlate with donors' capacity of giving. Earlier study shows that those who are more likely to give and support their alma mater tend to be older and employed (Weerts & Walsh, 2007). Notably, the number of children and marital status inversely correlates with alumni giving (Bruggink & Suddiqui, 1995; Monk, 2003). Other indicators include donor's race/ethnicity, gender, religious/civic engagements, educational backgrounds, residency, and citizenship. While female donors, those who engage in civic/religious activities, and those who possess advanced degrees were more likely to give, minority donors and non-U.S. citizens are less likely to support their alma mater (Hunter, Jones, & Boger 1999; Monks, 2003; Okunade et al., 1994; Weerts & Ronca, 2008). Marr and her colleagues' (2005) study provides a contradictory result, however, showing no significant gender difference in generosity. Other studies indicate that donors' prior volunteer experiences at non-profit organizations encouraged alumni giving (Clotfelter, 2003;

Hunter, Jones, & Boger, 1999; Taylor, 1999; Weerts & Ronca, 2008). Proximity, the physical distance to one's alma mater, indicate a mixed result. While a resident of the institution's home state is more likely to be involved in volunteering for the institution, the distance is not a significant determinant factor of monetary donations (Bruggink & Siddiqui, 1995; Weerts & Ronca, 2007).

## **Culture, History, and the Context of Chinese American Giving**

Understanding the culture, history, and the context of Chinese American giving provides another framework of this study. This section reviews: 1) the history of Chinese American giving; 2) the cultural contexts of Chinese American giving; and 3) Confucian teachings of philanthropy.

### **The History of Chinese American Giving**

This section presents an overview of the history of Chinese American educational giving. Originally, Chinese American giving flourished in accordance with the favorable policies between the Chinese and American governments. For instance, in 1913, Chinese government issued a policy, "*Juanzi Xianxue Baojiang Tiaoli*," to encourage overseas Chinese individuals to donate to schools in mainland China. This policy has been revised repeatedly—in 1914, 1918, 1929, 1945, and 1947—to further accommodate growing educational donations by Chinese overseas. In contrast, Chinese American giving declined during times of anti-overseas or anti-Chinese regimes (Deeney, 2002; Geithner, Johnson, & Chen, 2004; Nishimura, 1991). As previously mentioned in Chapter One, I will examine four Chinese American donor groups: 1) pre-1949 Chinese immigrants

from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan; 2) post-1949 Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan; 3) post-1978 Chinese immigrants from mainland China; and 4) second generation and beyond Chinese Americans. A review of the history of Chinese American educational giving provides critical insights to the subsequent analyses of Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education.

#### *Pre-1949 Chinese Immigrants from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan*

The first group consists of pre-1949 early immigrants from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and partial post-1949 immigrants from mainland Chinese ancestry.

The history of Chinese American giving began with an educational gift by Yung Wing, a former graduate of Yale University. In 1871, Yung Wing donated 500 taels of silver (approximately \$500, 1871 value) to establish a school in his motherland (Geithner, Johnson, & Chen, 2004). It is worth noting that this was the first school to be established in mainland China by an overseas Chinese individual.

Over the subsequent 100 years, shifts in Chinese social and political structure had significant impacts on the kinds and amounts of philanthropic educational giving to mainland China. Historically, Chinese American donations focused on the establishment of schools and facilities at primary and secondary education levels (Chao, 1999; Geithner et al., 2004). Moreover, their activities were undertaken mainly in their own or their ancestors' hometowns, including the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong and the Xiamen region in Fujian province in mainland China. For instance, during the years between 1915 and 1949, giving by overseas Chinese to education in the Fujian province exceeded 20 million RMB, helping to build at least 48 secondary schools and 967 primary schools

in the region (Pan, 1999). Only after the 1980s did donations from overseas Chinese, including Chinese Americans, contribute to higher education development. Their donations supported an establishment of universities and a provision of scholarships. Around this time, giving destinations expanded beyond traditional Guangdong and Fujian provinces, slowly encompassing other regions throughout the nation.

Early Chinese American giving developed via family clans and associations (*huiguan*). Late-nineteenth and early twentieth century's anti-Chinese laws and regulations in the U.S. further fostered the development of these family, ancestries, and occupation-tied organizations. In 1882, the U.S. government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act to prohibit further immigration from China and to deny American citizenship to Chinese descendants in the U.S. The Geary Act of 1892 extended the Act for another ten years. In 1924, the Asian Exclusion Act excluded all Asian immigrants except for Filipinos from entering the U.S. and from claiming natural U.S. citizenship. Throughout these time periods, Chinese American family clans and associations served benevolent roles in empowering the political, economic, and social evolutions of Chinese Americans communities. In addition to their domestic support of the poor and elderly, these organizations provided remittance to those in mainland China. In accordance with the U.S. anti-Chinese regime, early immigrants believed that modernizing their motherland was a way of improving their own reputation and social status in mainstream American society.

The repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 remobilized the immigration of Chinese Americans. This new wave of Chinese American immigration produced multiple billionaires who later directed their gifts to American education. Among them

include Wang An, the founder of Wang Laboratories. Born in Suzhou in 1920, he emigrated to the U.S. in 1945 to acquire a Ph.D. in applied physics at Harvard University. In 1951, he founded Wang Laboratories, which later developed into a multi-million dollar corporation (Deeney, 2002). Aside from his notable business accomplishments, he made generous gifts to U.S. higher education. His philanthropic contributions include the establishment of the Wang Institute of Graduate Studies of Soft Engineering, a multi-million-dollar gift to his alma mater, and a million dollar gift to Wellesley College.

On October 1, 1949, Mao Ze-Dong announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China. In the first years of Communist administration, the Chinese government implemented policies favorable to overseas Chinese education. In response to this new regime in their home country, many overseas Chinese started sending their children back home for education. The record shows that the number of overseas Chinese students accelerated from 390 in 1949; 1,606 in 1950; 2,211 in 1951; to 5,481 in 1952 (Ichikawa, 1988, p. 3). Accordingly, Chinese Americans began to support educational opportunities for returning students. During this time, many returning students lived in China while pursuing their education and then flew back overseas for employment opportunities. Consequently, schools in mainland China provided educational programs that reflected the needs of labor markets in host countries abroad. For instance, schools in the Taishan region in Guangdong, the area from which the majority of Chinese Americans originated, promoted bilingual education to develop students' English proficiency.

*Post-1949 Chinese Immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan*

From 1952 onward, the Chinese government's massive campaign against "enemies of the state" created an anti-overseas sentiment in the country. Also, around the same time period, the Communist government announced policies officially condemning all private schools. These reforms allowed the central government to completely reshape the form and function of these schools, including overseas schools financed by overseas Chinese. Over the next several years, government changes to these institutions produced schools strongly aligned with official state goals and ideologies. As a result of this political environment, overseas Chinese giving, including that of Chinese Americans from the mainland, diminished throughout China's transition to state socialism.

The launch of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 further impeded overseas Chinese giving. Any contact with overseas Chinese was considered a reactionary political activity. Considered as threats that would promote domestic capitalism, all overseas schools, excluding several agricultural schools, were closed indefinitely. In response to these anti-overseas government policies, overseas Chinese giving ceased until more political changes began in the late 1970s.

In contrast to the anti-overseas political environment in mainland China, immigration from Taiwan and Hong Kong to the U.S. increased substantially, especially around the mid-1960s. This includes a group of refugees from mainland China who fled immediately after the Communist regime assumed power in mainland China. In 1965, the U.S. government passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 which abolished the national-origin quotas of immigration from the 1924 Immigration Act. Correspondingly, the Taiwanese government sent a large number of students and scholars

to the U.S. to foster Taiwan's political and economic development. Included among these students and scholars was Jerry Yang, the Co-Founder of Yahoo! and a graduate of Stanford University. Notably, he is also one of the most renowned Asian American philanthropists. In 2007, he donated \$75 million to establish the Jerry Yang and Akiko Yamazaki Environment and Energy Building at his alma mater. This was the largest single gift to U.S. higher education by an Asian American philanthropist.

### *Post-1978 Chinese Immigrants from Mainland China*

The third group of Chinese Americans consists of post-1978 mainland Chinese immigrants. Since the late 1970s, the Chinese government has been very keen to decentralize educational governance and diversify their financial resources. In addition to changes brought about by the open-door policies of the late 1970s and the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, the Chinese government also established broader policies to encourage giving, including preferential treatments for partial tax-deductions, donor's authority in specifying utilization of donation, as well as allowing donors to specify the names of their gifts. These Chinese political and economic policies in the 1980s re-stabilized mainland Chinese philanthropic environments.

The Chinese government's policy changes have instigated a dramatic expansion of mainland Chinese students studying overseas. The official statistics show that from 1978 to 2003, 700,200 Chinese students and scholars studied in 108 countries throughout the world (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2009). In 2003, those in the U.S. account for 15.4% of aggregate overseas students and scholars. Owing to the U.S. preference categories for well-educated and highly skilled immigrants, many

of these recent immigrants have become successful professionals and business entrepreneurs. Although many within this third group of immigrants are still early or mid-career professionals, their presence cannot be denied as a newly emerging group of Chinese American philanthropists.

### *Second Generation and beyond Chinese Americans*

The fourth group includes second generation and beyond Chinese Americans who were born and/or raised primarily in the U.S. For the purpose of this study, this group includes 1.5 generation Chinese Americans who were born overseas and immigrated to the U.S. early in life, and those who were born in the U.S. and spent only a couple of years overseas before moving back to the U.S. during their adolescence.

As mentioned above, early Chinese American immigrants possessed a strong loyalty to their hometowns and maintained an emotional attachment to their motherland. Accordingly, they have traditionally exerted efforts to develop mainland Chinese education. In contrast, giving by the second generation and beyond tends to center around the benefits of U.S. education. As Chao (1999) states:

First-generation donors tend to give more exclusively to ethnic-specific causes both here and ‘back home.’ By the third generation, however, the largest portion of their contribution tends to support mainstream organizations. (p. 217)

Presumably, second generation and beyond Chinese Americans generally identify themselves as part of American cultural contexts and thus tend to give more directly to American higher education.

All in all, the historical trends of Chinese American giving reflect political, economic, and social movements in mainland China as well as the U.S. It is also evident

that these four groups of Chinese American donors demonstrate different identity orientations and thus represent distinctly different giving patterns. While early immigrants tend to give for the improvement of mainland Chinese education, second generation and beyond Chinese Americans tend to give for the purpose of U.S. educational development. Giving by Hong Kong and Taiwanese immigrants of the 1950s and 60s coincides with the boost of Chinese millionaires and billionaires in the U.S. With stronger influences from Western culture in their home country/regions, their giving tends to target mainstream American education. More recently, well-educated students and scholars from mainland China have become an emerging group within Chinese American donor populations.

Among the four groups discussed above, this study focuses specifically on post-1949 Chinese immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong and second generation and beyond Chinese Americans. Post-1978 Chinese students from mainland China have just started establishing their professional careers. They are essential future prospects for U.S. universities and colleges but have not accumulated enough wealth to engage in charitable giving. Similarly, a majority of Chinese immigrants who came to the U.S. prior to 1949 experienced restricted opportunities in the labor market. Many of them worked in lower-wage jobs, leaving them with scarce financial resources to support charitable causes.

### **The Cultural Contexts of Chinese American Giving**

Understanding the culture behind Chinese American giving provides another framework for this study. The following section summarizes the literature on the giving patterns of Chinese American donors and then describes their charitable behaviors.

### *Giving Patterns of Chinese Americans*

The traditional concept of personal connection or *guanxi*, is all important in Chinese American giving. This people-to-people interaction develops the trust and respect between organizations and donors as well as the recipients. Personal relationships or connections distinguish Chinese networking and interdependence from Western individual independence (Geithner, Johnson, & Chen, 2002; Ho, 2004; Lee, 1999). In China, personal relationships and connections tend to carry more weight than formal, institutional, contractual, or legal relationships (Geithner et al., 2004). This explains why Chinese American giving often follows a “quid pro quo” practice: recipients are expected to reciprocate to donors when asked for return donations (Chao, 1999).

Chinese American giving tends to be private, personal, and small as opposed to Western charitable giving practices, which are often public, professional, large, and independent (Koehn & Yin, 2002). This pattern reflects traditional Confucian beliefs that charitable giving should be done quietly so as not to extract personal benefit from public altruism (Linebaugh, 2007). Deeney (2002) explains that Chinese American donors prefer to keep their generosity as a private matter, and their patterns of giving usually are transacted in a personal or familial manner. Consequently, many Chinese Americans, especially first-generation immigrants, are less likely to make planned gifts or leave bequests to charities (Ho, 2004).

Chinese American donors dedicate their personal time, most frequently serving as a board member or volunteering in Chinese American organizations. In the words of

Deeney (2002), “Chinese Americans take their philanthropy personally and often engage emotionally as well as willing to volunteer their own time for special causes” (p. 167).

### *Philanthropic Motivations of Chinese Americans*

One of the incentives of Chinese Americans giving is associated with gratitude, explained as charitable giving being a natural way to give back and share with the world (Pettey, 2002; Smith, Shue, Vest, & Villarreal, 1999).

The respect for scholarship has long been rooted in Chinese American culture (Geithner et al., 2004; Lee, 1999). Lee’s (1999) study states that Chinese Americans’ giving reflects their strong belief in education. Since most early Chinese immigrants were illiterate and faced many hardships, they believed knowledge and learning would help them to improve their social status. Lee (1999) explains that “higher education became an escalator to bourgeoisie status, as parents urged their children to major in the ‘hard’ sciences, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, engineering, business, medicine, dentistry, optometry and veterinary studies” (p. 42).

Another incentive for Chinese Americans’ educational giving is the Confucian idea of benevolence (*ren*) (Koehen & Yin, 2002; Lee, 1999; Pettey, 2002; Shao, 1995). The traditional Confucian concept of *ren*, translated as benevolence, charity, and love continues to influence Chinese American giving (Deeney, 2002). Lee (1999) indicates, “Giving of self exemplifies a certain sense of bonding, which is expressed by loyalty and reciprocity” (p.31). This Confucian concept is also reinforced by Taoist and Buddhist teachings of giving and reciprocity (Koehen & Yin, 2002). Shao (1995) further notes that “Asians give because their understanding that benevolence, compassion, interdependence

and basic respect for humankind are necessary ingredients to living, first in their families, then in their own ethnic communities, then in the greater society” (p. 56). Such Confucian teachings of philanthropy will be further discussed in the proceeding section.

Overall, Chinese American giving tends to be based on personal connections; both private and personal are accompanied by a strong desire to volunteer their personal time. Additionally, desires to reciprocate and share are strong motivators to establish these connections. As noted earlier, giving patterns and philanthropic motivations of Chinese American donation vary across different generations and descendants. Obviously, not all Chinese American educational giving reflects traditional traits of Chinese heritage. Some Chinese Americans follow Chinese cultural values while others possess stronger attachments to that of the U.S. However, earlier studies demonstrate the impact of Confucian beliefs, both in *ren*/benevolence and the value of education as significant philanthropic motivators for Chinese Americans. Though the Chinese American population is generationally and geographically diverse, Confucian beliefs traditionally place significant impact on the practices of Chinese American charitable giving. The proceeding section further explores this notion of philanthropy in Confucian teachings.

### **Confucian Teaching of Chinese Americans**

Given the documented influence of Confucianism in Chinese American giving, this section provides further analysis of philanthropic concepts in Confucian teachings. This section uses the Chinese, Japanese and English texts of *The Analects of Confucius* (*Lunyu*) to further explore the undocumented concept of philanthropy in Confucianism as

it relates to Chinese American giving. Following an overview of the Confucian text, this section examines: 1) the Confucian ideas of education, 2) benevolence (*ren*), 3) self-effacement, 4) filial piety (*xiao*), and 5) righteousness (*yi*) in relation to philanthropic patterns and motivation of Chinese American giving.

### *Confucian Texts*

Confucius was born in 551 B.C. in the ancient state of Lu (present Shandong province). Having been born into a poor family background, from a young age Confucius devoted himself to learning and teaching. Eventually he established an academy in his hometown, and he also traveled throughout China to advocate his teachings to political leaders. He believed that his teachings of relationships, practices, reverence, and values would bring success to all corners of society (Ames, 1998, p.2). After Confucius's death in 479 B.C.E., several of his students began compiling his teachings. More than one hundred years later, these disciples' efforts constructed the present, coherent form of *The Analects of Confucius*. Later, *The Analects of Confucius*, along with *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *The Mencius*, and *The Great Learning* formed the core curriculum for the Imperial examination in ancient China.

### *Understanding the Idea of Education*

Learning and study is the hallmark of Confucianism. This traditional focus on education is explicitly documented in the first teaching of *The Analects*:

Having studied, to then repeatedly apply what you have learned—is this not a source of pleasure? To have friends come from distant quarters—is this not a source of enjoyment? To go unacknowledged by others without harboring

frustration—is this not the mark of an exemplary person (*junzi*)? (Ames, 1998, p. 71)

In Confucius' teachings, education prepares younger generations to live in humane society, to gather together and to practice ritual piety (*li*) (Kaji, 1993; Miyazaki, 1974). Confucius also believed this idea of ritual piety is fundamental for governing a society. Indeed, the majority of his students were governmental officials and many of them made use of this concept in their attainment of policy leader positions.

Confucius' doctrine of education highlighted moral education. Moral education prepares younger generations for humane society while it rectifies social inequality. The Master says, "In instruction, there is no such thing as social classes" (Ames, 1998, p. 192). What Confucius indicates is that gender, race, socio-economic standing, and background do not determine social inequality, but rather, it is one's educational opportunities that matter. Especially for disadvantaged groups, education is the key to a new path. It not only helps one to become capable but also to understand the primary norms shared among the majority group members. Without this knowledge and understanding, one is less likely to succeed in mainstream society.

Scholarship support has always been one of the strongest motivators for Chinese American donors to engage in charitable giving. This parallels Chinese American donors' beliefs that education is a reliable tool with which to attain higher socio-economic status. They believe their gifts will benefit students' attainment of equal educational opportunities and the acquisition of the knowledge and norms necessary to succeed in mainstream society. In this way, their acts of giving become a remedy for addressing the issues of social justice and ethnic inequality.

### *Understanding the Idea of Benevolence (ren)*

Practicing benevolence (*ren*) is a primary doctrine in Confucius' teachings. Confucius' benevolence differs from the Christian concept of love (*agape*); while Christian love is based on the human relationship with God, Confucian benevolence refers to human relationships to humans (Yao, 1996). Thus, practicing benevolence is a consistent self-discipline primarily accomplished by eliminating self-interests and following ritual propriety (*li*). When asked about *ren*, Confucius answered, "through self-discipline and observing ritual propriety (*li*) one becomes authoritative in one's conduct" (*The Analects*, 12.1 in Ames, 1998, p. 152). Confucius believed such self-cultivation happens through helping others, both benevolently and beneficently (Yao, 1996).

The idea of benevolence resonates in the human relationships. In *The Analects*, Confucius says, "do not impose upon others what you yourself do not want, and you will not incur personal or political ill will" (*The Analects*, 12.1 in Ames, 1998, pp. 152-153). Through self-cultivation, people extend Confucian love to their family, to friends, and to the whole universe, eventually leading to the attainment of transcendence (Yao, 1996).

Consequently, Confucius' benevolence brings a happiness of life. The Master says:

Those persons who are not authoritative (*ren*) are neither able to endure hardship for long, nor to enjoy happy circumstances for any period of time. Authoritative persons are content in being authoritative; wise persons (*zhi*) flourish in it. (*The Analects* 4.2 in Ames, 1998, p. 89)

The Confucian idea of benevolence is a consistent practice of self-discipline, developing from one's own family, friends, and to larger groups. It is an understanding of treating others as oneself, helping those in need for altruistic purposes, and showing respect for one's relationships to others. Such charitable attitudes encourage the development of

philanthropy. In order to conduct benevolence, one has to reflect upon his/her own self-discipline. Thus, philanthropic activities derive from one's truly altruistic initiatives. Such notions of love and care for others transcend one's family and friends, gradually encompassing larger communities. Considering these aspects, charitable giving is a pathway to pursue happiness in life and serve the community, all while supplementing the ultimate ingredients of human life.

### *Understanding the Idea of Self-effacement*

Confucius' teachings of benevolence involved a spirit of deprecating oneself. The Master, Confucius, says, "Exemplary persons (*junzi*) are distinguished but not arrogant; petty persons are the opposite" (*The Analects* 13.26 in Ames, 1998, p. 169). In Confucius' view, exemplary persons are impervious to the temptation of personal merits. Persons aspiring to the status of exemplary persons (*junzi*) must embrace the truth that "to act with an eye to personal profit will incur a lot of resentment" (*The Analects* 4.12 in Ames, 1998, p. 91).

In practice, exemplary persons embrace frugality while they devalue wealth and prosperity. Indeed, frugality is a way of pursuing the *dao* and achieving "a love of learning (*haoxue*).” The Master says:

In eating, exemplary persons (*junzi*) do not look for a full stomach, not in their lodgings for comfort and contentment. They are persons of action yet cautious in what they say. They repair to those who know the way (*dao*) and find improvement in their company, such persons can indeed be said to have a love of learning (*haoxue*). (*The Analects* 1.14 in Ames, 1998, p. 74)

Philanthropy becomes an act of petty persons if donor motivations relate to self-interests, including seeking selfish gains from personal relationships, gaining access to particular

groups of people, or obtaining entry for one's children to prestigious universities. In Confucius' teachings, extravagance contradicts sanity. If a donor pledges gifts for self-interest, this act is no different from publicizing their wealth for the benefit of individual advantages. Examinations of those teachings support previous findings that Confucianism shapes Chinese American giving, encouraging it to be small, private, and personal. Additionally, these ideas of frugality further clarify Deeney's (2002) statement that Chinese American donors prefer to keep their generosity as a private matter. In alignment with traditional Confucian teachings of self-effacement, Chinese Americans tend to dissociate themselves from philanthropy particularly to benefit the public, an effort of publicizing one's wealth and prosperity.

#### *Understanding the Idea of Filial Piety (xiao)*

Confucius celebrates filial and fraternal responsibilities as a fundamental tenet for conducting benevolence. Confucius says, "Exemplary persons (*junzi*) concentrate their efforts on the root, for the root having taken hold, the way (*dao*) will grow there from. As for filial and fraternal responsibility, it is, I suspect, the root of benevolence (*ren*)" (*The Analects* 1.2 in Ames, 1998, p. 71). Confucius regards humane society in terms of "five relationships," including the ruler-subjects, father-son, husband-wife, elder and younger brother, and friend and friend (Ching, 1977, p. 96). Reciprocal and mutual responsibilities exist in between these relationships, such as a child owing loyalty to their parents, while parents show care for their children.

This practice of filial piety begins within the family unit. The Master says, "give your mother and father nothing to worry about beyond your physical well-being" (*The*

*Analects* 2.6 in Ames, 1998, p. 77). Indeed, three out of five relationships in Confucius' teachings involve familial relationships, including father-son, husband-wife, and elder-younger brothers. Eventually, however, filial responsibility extends beyond family, to friend-networks and other relationships in the community. In Confucianism, the concept of "community" refers to the humane relationships shared by common cultures, as opposed to Christian ways of forming communities based on the religious bonds of faith (Ching, 1977, p.101). The Master says:

As a younger brother and son, be filial (*xiao*) at home and deferential (*di*) in the community; be cautious in what you say and then make good on your word (*xin*); love the multitude broadly and be intimate with those who are authoritative in their conduct (*ren*). (*The Analects* 1.6 in Ames, 1998, p. 72)

Overall, filial piety begins within the family unit. It is one's responsibility to be loyal to an elder member of the family as well as being financially supportive to those individuals in times of need. Even though such filial responsibilities expand beyond family to friends and to the larger community, shared experiences and culture effectively bond their relationships. In other words, their community restricts people who possess comparable experiences and traditional culture. Additionally, such humane relationships value reciprocal responsibilities. It is not surprising, therefore, that Chinese American donors tend to support Chinese American-related causes. Philanthropic motivations of Chinese American donors often express this passion of enhancing their own ethnic culture, embracing the idea of filial piety. Also, following the primary order of filial responsibilities, their charitable giving often starts within families and eventually expands to their own ethnic communities and to the greater society (Shao, 1995, p. 56).

### *Understanding the Idea of Righteousness (yi)*

Knowing and acting in accordance with righteousness is invaluable in the community. Confucius' idea of righteousness implies conducting "right" things or solely performing things because they are appropriate. Confucius states, "Exemplary persons (*junzi*) in making their way in the world are neither bent on nor against anything; rather, they go with what is appropriate (*yi*)" (*The Analects* 4.10 in Ames, 1998, p. 91). Pursuit of personal merits or self-interests must embrace the ideas of righteousness. The Master says, "Exemplary persons (*junzi*) understand what appropriate (*yi*) is; petty persons understand what is of personal advantage (*li*)" (*The Analects* 4.17 in Ames, 1998, p. 92).

Notably, the idea of righteousness embraces Confucian teachings of benevolence, self-effacement, and filial piety. The Confucian concept of righteousness teaches people to make decisions based on merits of "others" instead of individual self-interests. This relates to ideas of benevolence and self-effacement in that all emphasize the absence of "self" in decision making processes. Additionally, righteousness aligns with the Confucian idea of filial piety: considering what is most beneficial for people within fraternal relationships, first and foremost, and then expanding influence to the larger society. Overall, what defines exemplary persons from petty persons is their ability to prioritize fraternal obligations over individual self-interests.

Obviously, Confucius' doctrine of righteousness naturally encapsulates charitable behaviors. For Chinese American donors, it is certainly "appropriate" to exert their wealth for those in need. Their gift not only empowers younger generations but also benefits their family, friends, and their community. From a donor's perspective, charitable behavior manifests their loyalty, love, compassion, and care for others. This

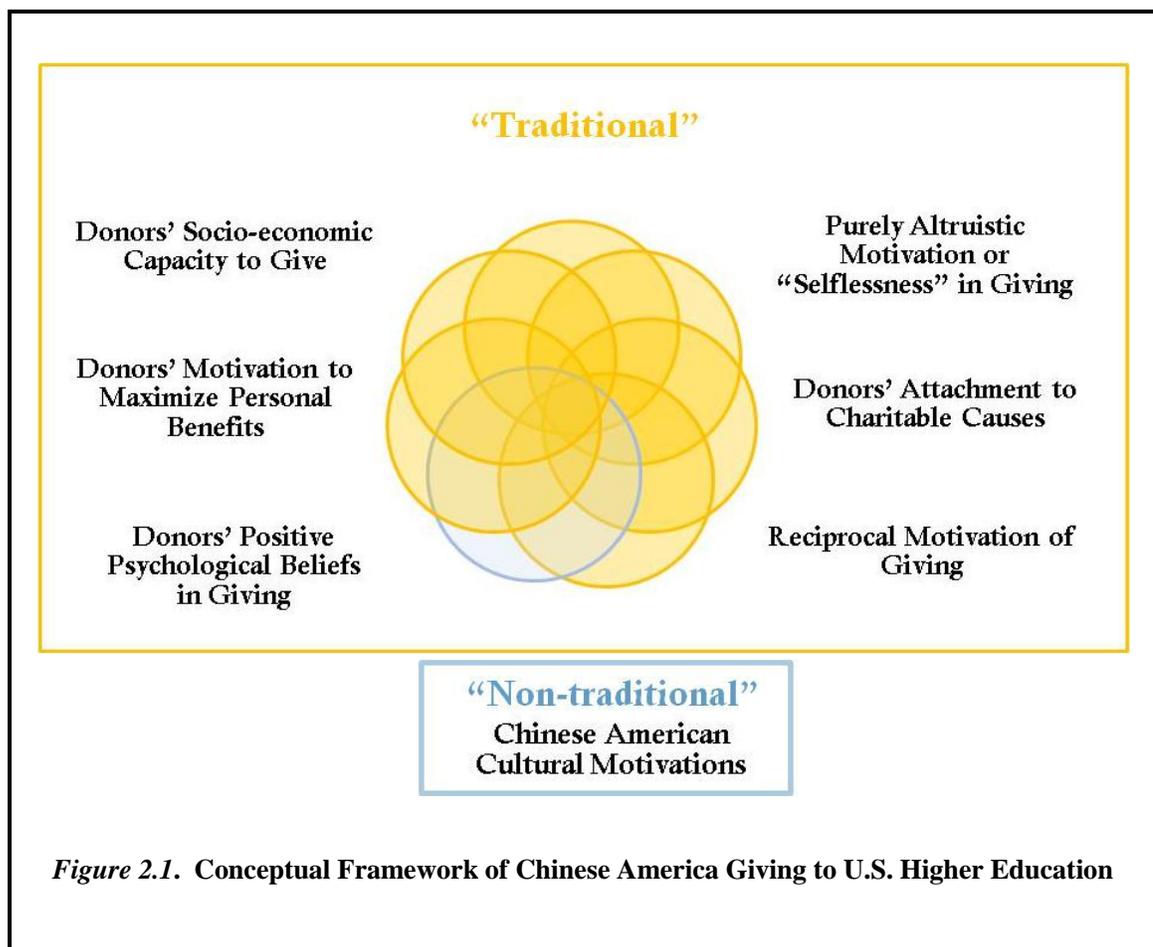
act of altruism reflects a sense of righteousness and such attitudes naturally form meaningful human relationships.

Examination of *The Analects* and other Confucian classics shows there are numerous related phenomenon and behavior that are or will likely manifest in Chinese American giving patterns. These include Confucian concepts of education, benevolence, filial piety, righteousness, and self-effacement. While Confucian beliefs in education and the value of benevolence develop the culture of Chinese American philanthropy, the belief in self-effacement celebrates generosity with one's wealth. Such preferences for introversion and frugality cultivate smaller, more personal and private patterns of Chinese American giving. Additionally, reflecting their Confucian belief in filial piety, Chinese American giving initiates within the family unit and among friends and gradually expands to larger communities.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The section summarizes the key concepts of donor motivations from earlier studies and suggests a theoretical framework used for subsequent analyses of Chinese American giving to American higher education. As shown in Figure 2.1, the reviews of current donor motivation theories and historical and cultural explanations of Chinese American giving illustrate seven key components, including: (1) pure altruistic motivation, (2) personal benefits, (3) psychological benefits, (4) reciprocity, (5) attachment, (6) giving capacity, and (7) culture. The assumption is that Chinese Americans demonstrate different levels of personal beliefs and orientations. Specifically, these central themes break down into several subcategories. For instance, the orientation

of donors' emotional attachments varies across Chinese American donors' home countries, communities, and alma maters. Similarly, differing levels of institutional and communal attachments motivate donors; they may desire to improve U.S.-China relationships or to enhance relationships with their alma mater. Another framework describes donors' desires to reciprocate, to give back to show a sense of gratitude to U.S. universities while possibly seeking social benefits in return for their gifts. These themes provide conceptual frameworks in which to explore the similarities and differences among each of the sample participants and the discrete characteristics of Chinese American donors' motivation to support American higher education.



### **Purely Altruistic Motivation or “Selflessness” in Giving**

The dominant theory of pure altruistic models shares many parallels with the Confucian teaching of benevolence (*ren*). As noted above, public goods models emphasize pure altruism as the primary donor motivator. Individuals strictly benefit from their private consumption to maximize public goods for others. Similarly, the Confucian concept of benevolence reinforces practices of love, compassion, or humanness to other people. Giving to others in both Western and Confucian paradigms of altruism celebrates the value of selflessness.

### **Donor Motivation to Maximize Personal Benefits**

The impure altruism model and the impact theory describe a notion of “self” in donor behaviors. Donors give primarily to maximize their personal benefits. The impure altruism model reveals self-interest motivations of donors, including tax incentives, social approval, and the establishment of new networks. Additionally, the impact philanthropy model illustrates a donor’s desire to maximize their influence on charitable goods. Donors contribute explicitly to observe impacts of their gift. Hence, any external contributions or any factors that denied their charitable needs interfered with a donor’s satisfaction.

### **Donors’ Positive Psychological Beliefs in Giving**

Psychological research discusses a notion of “joy-of-giving”: donors’ positive feelings and beliefs about acts of giving. The donating behavioral model states that donors believe in the importance of giving. Similarly, the model of personal donorship

suggests donors' desire for self-satisfaction. Empowered by their positive beliefs in philanthropy, donors give to enjoy psychological satisfaction from their affordable gifts. Reason action theorists highlight donors' positive beliefs in the consequences of giving. Once donors identify positive reasons to support, including the perceived needs or social recognitions, they become more philanthropic. Similarly, planned behavior theorists demonstrate that donating intentions relate to social pressure and moral obligations. When donors feel external pressure and obligations, they develop stronger incentives to give. Similarly, the theory of prosocial behavior, from the field of psychology, states that donors contribute more to a cause when they find an urgent need or value among those who share personal or cultural norms.

### **Donors' Attachment to Charitable Causes**

The expectancy model, investment model, and the identification model parallel Chinese American concepts of institutional and communal relationships. The identification model addresses the influence of "we-ness" or self-attachment in charitable giving. Additionally, the investment model and expectancy model identify emotional and physical attachment of alumni to their alma maters. Overall, people give when they identify themselves as a member of a group or a community. Notably, Confucian concepts of community refer to any group of people who share the common culture: the sense of "Chineseness."

### **Reciprocal Motivation of Giving**

Social exchange theory and reciprocity theory correlate with the “quid pro quo” practice of Chinese American giving. Reciprocity theory focuses on the reciprocal relationships between a donor and a recipient. In Chinese American contexts, receiving a charitable gift dictates an absolute obligation for a recipient to give back. Similarly, social exchange theories reveal a dual-motivation of donors. On the one hand, individuals give to maximize the provision of public goods for others, while on the other hand they claim private benefits in return for their gifts. This sheds light on similar dual motivations of Chinese American donors, further explaining not only their altruistic behavior to benefit the community but also prevailing self-interests to maximize their own goods.

### **Donors’ Socio-Economic Capacity to Give**

An examination of “traditional” alumni motivations reveals donor capacity as a significant determinant of alumni giving. Earlier studies related to donor capacity indicate the correlation between the level of alumni contribution and life-cycle; alumni giving increases as a person advances further in the cycle of life, with retirement age being a typical boundary. The demographic characteristics of alumni also evidence a significant impact on alumni giving. Alumni who are employed, female, engaged in religious/civic activities, and possess advanced degrees are more likely to support their alma mater as compared to their counterparts. In contrast, those who are married, have children, possess non-U.S. citizenship, and identify themselves as ethnic minorities are less likely to engage in philanthropy. Notable is the fact that these findings remain

inconclusive; the result vary considerably depending on the definition of alumni giving (volunteer, giving, or both), sample size, and the time period of study conducted.

### **Chinese American Cultural Motivations**

Confucian teachings celebrate traditional beliefs in education, arguing that higher education provides knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in life. Additionally, Confucianism states that people engage in five relationships, namely ruler-subjects, father-son, husband-wife, elder and younger brother, and friend and friend (Ching, 1977, p. 96). Accordingly, filial responsibilities progress from family unit to friends to a larger community. In addition to those listed above is the Confucian value of self-effacement. In Confucianism, exemplary persons (*junzi*) celebrate frugality and despise wealth. Confucius' teachings require that generosity should be kept as a private matter.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS**

The study employs qualitative inquiry to explore the philanthropic motivations of Chinese American donors to support American higher education. Merriam (1998) mentions that qualitative research helps a researcher to “understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural settings as possible” (p. 5). Also, in contrast to the quantitative paradigm, qualitative approaches examine social phenomenon from participants’ perspectives (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). As noted in Chapter Two, earlier empirical studies of Chinese American giving do not integrate philanthropic theories, while prior theoretical studies on donor motivations fail to examine non-White donor behaviors. This study explores the contemporary phenomenon of Chinese American giving through the “voices” of Chinese American donors. Theoretical frameworks developed in the previous chapter provide an analytical lens through which to illustrate Chinese American giving. I also allow themes to emerge throughout the study that cannot be explained by current theories and frameworks. By doing so, I present a story of Chinese American donors behind the scene of U.S. higher education development.

### **Data Collection**

#### **Identifying Participants**

This study explores multiple-case studies of Chinese American giving to major U.S. universities. Case study inquiry, according to Yin (2009), is preferable in seeking answers to “how” and “why” questions about “the holistic and meaningful characteristics

of real-life events” (p. 4). It is an examination of dialogues behind contemporary issues, especially those of which we have very limited access to. In this regard, case studies address two purposes: 1) to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study; and 2) to develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 29). By exploring the voices and experiences of the key actors, namely Chinese American donors, this study attempts to answer the question of why and how Chinese Americans support U.S. higher education.

Data collection involved in-depth interviews with fourteen Chinese American donors in order to investigate the reasons why Chinese Americans support U.S. higher education. Identification of Chinese American donors employed a “snowballing” strategy to obtain the most information-rich cases possible. This strategy involves asking for reference from each participant (Merriam, 1998). I relayed my sampling from my personal contacts and referral from Chinese American donors. I also contacted development officers working at major universities and asked them to refer me to potential Chinese American donor participants. Simultaneously, I used annual reports and donor honor rolls to identify additional participants.

The interviews were approximately 30-90 minutes long. At the beginning of each interview, I asked for respondents’ consent to take digital recording of the interviews. The original criteria of data collection included: 1) if the individuals represented post-1949 Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan or second generation and beyond Chinese Americans; 2) if the individual has donated more than \$500,000 to American higher education; and 3) if the individual resides in the U.S. To get the most information-rich sample, I revised the criteria and expanded the sample by including smaller gift

donors, those who gave less than \$ 500,000. I collected samples until I reached a saturation point.

### **Interview Design**

According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), interview questions are a combination of main questions, follow-up questions, and probes. Main questions address central themes of the research, followed up by additional questions to encourage elaboration on participants' responses. Probes are used in between questions to increase the conversational flows. The interview structure of this study followed Rubin and Rubin's (2005) "opening the lock" and "tree and branch" patterns: the "opening the lock structure" explores a broad portrait of the research while the "tree and branch" patterns examine specific research problems (pp. 144-145).

Seven themes drawn from earlier studies (i.e. altruism, personal benefits, psychological benefits, reciprocity, attachment, giving capacity, and culture) shaped the structure of the interview protocol. As shown in the Appendix A, in-depth interviews with Chinese American donors addressed three main topics: 1) general perceptions of charitable giving; 2) giving to U.S. higher education; and 3) personal views of philanthropy in Chinese American communities. Following the introductory questions regarding personal background, the interviews addressed donors' perceptions of giving behaviors. In particular, the questions explored donors' orientations toward philanthropic activities and past giving experiences. These questions were critical for understanding donors' levels of giving capacity, altruism, and emotional attachment to a cause. Questions about donors' educational background, voluntary involvements, and several

other questions on philanthropic motivations from the later section were utilized to observe reciprocal relationships between donors' collegiate experiences and their gifts. Notably, these introductory questions also helped establish a rapport with participants. Then, the interview continued with two purposes, namely investigating giving to U.S. higher education and donors' perceptions of philanthropy in Chinese American communities.

The first section addressed critical questions of how and why participants gave to U.S. universities. In order to understand donors' institutional and communal attachments, the interview addressed questions such as why they chose to give to a particular university and how they thought Chinese ethnicity influenced their charitable decisions. From the perspective of psychological benefits, I asked questions related to what originally initiated their support of the university and how they perceived the needs and impacts of their gifts. The questions on donor relationship and acknowledgements related to the reciprocity component of donor behaviors. I also explored the altruism motivation of donors via a question that asks how they perceived the impact of their gifts on society. The questions about gift recognitions and the impact of their gifts on their own personal goals revealed personal motivations of giving. This section also explored critical questions regarding successful fundraising strategies targeting Chinese Americans and qualifications for effective development officers. Overall, these examined fundamental issues of Chinese American gifts in American higher education as they relate to university fundraising strategies.

The second branch addressed Chinese American donors' perceptions of philanthropy in Chinese American communities. These questions were critical in

exploring personal and cultural norms of philanthropy and its relation to one's charitable decisions. Specifically, this section examined predominant perceptions of Chinese American philanthropy, factors that identified Chinese American giving as small, personal, and private as opposed to Western forms of large, professional, and public giving (Koehn & Yin, 2002). Also, this section of the interview addressed how the recent expansion of Chinese international students studying in the U.S. affects giving in Chinese American communities. The assumption was that these recent immigrants have become undeniable future donors for American higher education. While earlier studies have documented generational differences among first and second generation and beyond Chinese Americans, until now, no study has documented philanthropic activities among these newly-arrived immigrants, who constitute a large segment of the Chinese population in the U.S. The interview addressed Chinese American donors' perceptions of how the recent growth of international Chinese students affects Chinese American donor motivations and the future of development and directions.

## **Data Analysis**

The plan of data analysis contained three parts: 1) data analysis during data collection; 2) organizing and managing data; and 3) analyzing data (Merriam, 1998).

### **Data Analysis during Data Collection**

Merriam (1998) states, "the right way to analyze data in a qualitative study is to do it *simultaneously* with data collection" (p. 162). Throughout the interviews with Chinese American donors, I took digital recordings and comprehensive notes of key

issues raised in the conversations. Additionally, I documented observer comments from interviewees' narratives and appearances. These first-hand documents provided supplemental information for understanding non-traditional concepts of giving and practices.

### **Data Organization and Management**

Reid (1992) described three phases of data management: data preparation, data identification, and data manipulation (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 167). Data preparation involves transforming raw data into a descriptive manner through typing up notes and observers' comments as well as transcribing interviews. Data identification involves labeling of raw data into broader schemes. For interviews with Chinese American donors, I categorized passages into seven main subjects using hand-coding and the ATLAS.ti software. These subjects include 1) Altruism (ALTM), 2) Personal benefits (PRSN), 3) Psychological benefits (PSCH), 4) Reciprocity (RCPY), 5) Attachment (ATCH), 6) Capacity (CPCY), and 7) Culture (CLTR). Each subject was identified into multiple sub-categories. For instance, under the "Attachment" segment, I explored the orientation of donors' emotional attachment: to their alma mater (ATCH-ALM), the Chinese American community (ATCH-CH), and personal gifts (ATCH-PRSN). The "Reciprocity" theme was divided into sub-categories reflecting the direction of social exchange: i.e., giving back for positive college experiences (RCPY-PSCL), scholarships/fellowships (RCPY-SCHR), their school's philanthropic philosophy (RCPY-SCHL), student-mentor relationships (RCPY-MNTR), and having met his/her partner in college (RCPY-PRTN). Throughout the data managing and organization

processes, personal information of individual interviewees, including name of participants, universities, and companies, were coded with pseudonyms. Data manipulation required reorganization of identified data. I sorted data by each category for the usage of proceeding data analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis involves two phases: 1) theoretical interpretations of the cases studied, and 2) development of theory (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Using the aforementioned theoretical explanations of traditional donor behaviors, including altruism, personal benefits, psychological benefits, reciprocity, attachment, socio-economic giving capacity, and culture, I analyzed charitable behaviors of post-1949 Hong Kong and Taiwanese immigrants and second generation and beyond Chinese Americans. As I have discussed earlier in Chapter Two, I assumed that Chinese American donors embraced different levels of altruism, personal and psychological benefits, reciprocity, attachment, and giving capacity, and culture in their gifts. While a closer emotional attachment with their home country empowers one group to support China-related issues, the other group may give to non-Chinese causes because of their stronger tie with American culture. I assumed that the influence of Chinese American cultural beliefs and values on actual instances of charitable giving, as represented in Confucian teachings and Asian American cultures of philanthropy, would vary among the different donor groups. In the section on donors' perceptions of philanthropy in the Chinese American community, I allowed cultural explanations—those not mentioned in the previous literature—emerge throughout the analysis.

The second phase involved development of the theories explaining Chinese American donor behaviors studied. As Merriam (1998) explained, “The category scheme does not tell the whole story—that there is more to be understood about the phenomenon” (p. 188). By synthesizing empirical perspective of donor motivations and cultural understandings of Chinese American giving, I understood Chinese American giving in a more theoretical and philosophical manner.

As explained by Merriam (1998), the study follows the two stages of data analysis in multiple case studies—the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis (p. 194). Through a combination of within-case studies—within each Chinese American donor group—and cross-case analyses of two different Chinese American donor groups, this study attempts to demonstrate cohesive patterns of Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education.

## **Trustworthiness**

### **Credibility**

Credibility addresses the correspondence between research findings and reality. Qualitative research assumes that reality is “holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing” (Merriam, 1998, p. 202). To understand the complexity and holistic dynamics of human behaviors, the qualitative researcher becomes a principle investigator conducting observations and interviews.

Early studies suggest multiple strategies to enhance credibility. One strategy is triangulation—employing multiple sources of data and methods to confirm the credibility of findings (Merriam 1998; Mertens, 2005; Yin, 2009). As noted above, this study used

documentation reviews and interviews based on data collected from content analysis and in-depth interviews. Another notable strategy of increasing credibility involves member checks: verifying data and preliminary findings with participants of the research (Merriam, 1998; Mertens, 2005). In the process of data collection and analyses, I returned results to respondents for their confirmation. Peer debriefing—discussion of hypothesis, analyses, and conclusions with peers— further establishes credibility (Merriam, 1998; Mertens, 2005). As a Japanese graduate student, I am aware of my personal bias; I am examining issues of Chinese Americans from an outsider’s perspective. In order to minimize the influence of subjectivity, I asked a Chinese American colleague to debrief the hypothesis and findings throughout the data collection and analysis procedures. Additionally, I asked native English speakers for correctness and appropriateness of the language.

### **Transferability**

Transferability examines the degree to which the findings of a study can be transferred or generalized for other situations (Merriam, 1998; Mertens, 2005). The central concern is whether the findings are generalizable for other circumstances, in different time periods, environments, and among different demographics. In order to maximize transferability, researchers need to provide “thick descriptions,” including “extensive descriptions of the time, place, context, and culture” (Mertens, 2005, p. 256). Also, examining multiple situations, sites and cases enhances generalizability (Merriam, 1998, p. 212). Exploring a phenomenon in different contexts supports the findings, helping them become applicable to other populations and settings.

Understanding these strategies, this study presented multiple-case studies of Chinese American giving. I emphasized multiple perspectives throughout the research efforts. This study not only views Chinese American giving in the historical context, but also approaches current trends of Chinese American practices of giving to U.S. universities. Moreover, the research highlighted generational disparity among Chinese American donors, illustrating different cultures and beliefs among post-1949 Taiwanese and Hong Kong immigrants and second generation and beyond. Furthermore, the research used purposeful sampling to select different types of institutions across the nation.

### **Research Ethics**

I exercised great caution to minimize personal biases and to treat participants' opinions with great respect. Throughout the process of data collection, organization, and analyses, I employed member checks, peer debriefings, and triangulations to self-reflect personal biases. Also, I strictly protected the confidentiality of informants. All personal information was treated with pseudonyms and only the researcher had access to collected data.

### **Limitations**

Notable limitation of this study is a lack of quantitative data on Chinese American giving. My preliminary study has revealed that the majority of universities fail to track donations by ethnicity (Tsunoda, 2010). Thus, quantitative datasets are not available to conduct comprehensive analysis to help provide broader understandings of current trends

and patterns of philanthropic giving by Chinese Americans. In view of this limitation, I employed case studies to feature the uniqueness and diversity behind Chinese American giving.

Moreover, case studies do have their limitations (Guba & Lincom, 1981; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Guba and Lincom (1981) noted that case studies can potentially “oversimplify or exaggerate a situation, leading the reader to erroneous conclusions about the actual state of affairs” (p. 377). Because researchers function as a primary investigator throughout data selection, data collection, and analysis efforts, findings rely heavily on researchers’ abilities and sensitivities (Merriam, 1998). This strong subjectivity of researchers threatens the credibility and transferability of a study (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). Considering these limitations, I employed multiple-case studies to increase trustworthiness of a study. As Merriam (1998) noted, the more a researcher increases the volume and variety of cases, the more compelling and representative the findings of a study become (p. 40).

Another challenge of this study is identifying research participants. Earlier studies have revealed the introverted characteristics of Chinese American donors (Deeney, 2002). In fact, many donors abstained from participating in this study citing their concerns for privacy. Considering these obstacles, I took a practical approach by adjusting sample criteria and conducting telephone interviews to acquire the most information-rich data available.

## **CHAPTER 4: CHINESE AMERICAN DONOR CHARACTERISTICS AND GIVING PATTERNS TO U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION**

This chapter summarizes demographic and philanthropic characteristics of Chinese American donors interviewed for this study. The section begins with an outline of participant profiles, describing donors' demographic information, educational backgrounds, volunteering activities, award/medal nominations, and their past charitable giving records. Pseudonyms have been used for individual, university, and company names to protect the anonymity of donors interviewed for this study. A discussion of key characteristics concerning donor profiles follows in the next section.

The latter section of this chapter explores philanthropic characteristics of participants interviewed for this study. Specifically, this section examines how donors learned the concept of giving and how they support U.S. higher education. The section examines Chinese American donors' philanthropic philosophies from three perspectives: family, culture, and society. To answer the question of how Chinese Americans donate to U.S. higher education, this section further illustrates noticeable trends regarding giving channels and patterns of Chinese American gifts to U.S. universities and colleges.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Chinese American Donors Participant Profile**

This section outlines detailed profiles of participants studied for this project. As explained earlier, each name has been changed to a pseudonym.

### *Cai*

Cai is a retired chemist born in mainland China. He graduated from a private university in Taiwan with a B.A. in chemistry and came to the U.S. in the early 1970s where he completed his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. He received fellowships throughout his graduate works. He continued his post-doctoral studies at a leading private university. While in college and graduate school, he had minimal volunteering experiences. Prior to retirement, he had worked at two leading companies as a chemist. He is currently on the boards of his alma maters both in the U.S. and Taiwan. Besides higher education, he gives to a cultural institution supporting high school students. At the time of the interview, he had given more than \$50,000 to charity, 20% of which has targeted U.S. higher education.

### *Chu*

Chu is in his early 60's, and he has spent his entire life in the U.S. He received his B.S. in engineering and his MBA from a private university. Throughout his education, he was a fortunate recipient of fellowships and scholarships. He was actively involved in volunteering during his undergraduate years. He is currently a senior financial analyst at one of the nation's largest companies. He is married and has three children. He has supported and served on boards of both his alma mater and cultural institutions. He received alumni awards and medals from his alma mater. His total lifetime giving estimates \$250,000, of which 25% has been directed to higher education. Besides higher education, he has also supported nonprofit organizations focusing on culture, health, and education.

### *Dong*

Dong is a retired consultant and entrepreneur born in Taiwan. He is in his early 60's. He and his family moved to the U.S. more than two decades ago. He attended public schools in the U.S. and received his B.A. in business from one of the nation's top public universities. Ever since high school, he has been working as a social worker in his neighborhood Chinatown. During college, he did not receive any scholarships. He serves on the boards of cultural institutions, universities, and foundations focusing on performing arts. In the last 20 years, he has given two major gifts over \$150,000 and dedicates approximately \$75,000 to annual gifts. Only about 5% of his donations support U.S. higher education; his gifts are dedicated largely to Chinese and Asian American nonprofits focusing on art.

### *Fang*

Fang was born in mainland China in the late 1940s. He received most of his education in Taiwan where he earned his B.S. in economics. He came to the U.S. to pursue his business degree at a state university in the Midwest. During his graduate studies, he worked as a teaching assistant and had very little time for volunteering. Fang is a founder, chairman, and CEO of multiple companies in capital market. He is married. Currently, he is a board member of his Taiwanese alma mater and an adviser to his alma mater in the U.S. His life-time donations approximate \$500,000, of which 10% are dedicated to U.S. higher education. His philanthropic contributions further support religious organizations and Taiwanese universities.

### *Guo*

Guo is a female entrepreneur and former banker born in Taiwan in the early 1960s. She and her family spent several years overseas and then immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1970s. She earned her B.A. in economics and Chinese Studies from a liberal arts college for women. She was a fortunate recipient of a full scholarship while pursuing her MBA in finance at a private university. Today, she is a co-founder and managing director of a wealth management company. She has given to and served on boards of her alma mater, cultural institutions, and foundations focusing on education and leadership. Up to the writing of this study, she has donated between \$50,000 to \$100,000, of which more than half of her gifts support U.S. higher education.

### *Han*

Han has spent his entire life in the U.S. He is in his early 40's and is unmarried. He graduated from a private liberal arts college with a B.A. in philosophy and mathematics. During college, he received multiple scholarships and was actively involved in volunteer activities. He went to law school at one of the most prestigious universities and practiced law for several years. Today, he is an executive director of an investment firm. He founded a nonprofit focusing on environmental and educational issues. His lifetime donations estimate \$1 million, of which 50% has been dedicated to U.S. higher education. All of his gifts to U.S. higher education have been in support of science and psychology programs.

### *Kao*

Kao was born in mainland China in the late 1940s. Several years later, Kao and his family fled to Hong Kong. In late 1960s, Kao joined his father in the U.S. He went to a teachers' college and then transferred to a state university, majoring in biology and chemistry. Later, he received a scholarship to pursue his Ph.D. in biology. He worked part-time jobs during college and had minimal time for volunteer activities. He is currently a founder and CEO of a biotechnology firm. He serves on boards of universities, academic societies, and Asian American nonprofits focusing on science and culture. While he contributes to educational and cultural causes in the U.S., he also gives to educational programs in rural mainland China. He is one of the recipients of an alumnus award from his alma mater. His total life-time donations estimate \$5 million, of which 80% were dedicated to U.S. higher education.

### *Liu*

Liu is a female entrepreneur born in the early 1940s. While she and her family spent several years in Asia, she has essentially lived most of her life in the U.S. She earned her B.A. from a women's college where she received scholarships and engaged in volunteer activities. She also completed her MBA at a private university. She is married. Today, she is chief executive officer of an investment management firm. She has given to and served on boards of her alma mater as well as other universities, cultural institutions, and Asian Pacific American (APA) nonprofits serving Chinese American communities.

### *Lu*

Lu was born in the U.S., spent most of her childhood in Hong Kong, and moved back to the U.S. for higher education. She obtained her B.A. in economics and political science from a public university, and her MA in International Management from a private university. During college, her family supported her education and she had minimal volunteer experiences. Today, she is a founder and director of an investment company on the West Coast. She is married and has children. She has given to and served on boards of universities, a museum, APA nonprofits, and a foundation focusing on women leaders. Her life-time donations estimate \$500,000, of which 95% is dedicated to U.S. higher education. Besides her individual gifts, her and her families have contributed approximately \$10 million to charitable causes.

### *Ma*

U.S. born and raised, Ma is a vice president for one of the largest companies in the U.S. He received his B.S. in accounting from a state university and continued his MBA at a private university. He did not receive any scholarship during college and thus worked part-time to pay his tuition. As a result, he had very minimal time to engage in volunteering. Currently, he serves on university boards and other APA nonprofits focusing on education and Chinese Americans. He previously received an award in philanthropy from a community organization. His life-time giving approximates \$500,000, of which 80% supports U.S. higher education. His donations support his alma-mater, APA nonprofits, and other nonprofit organizations related to his professional ties.

### *Ong*

Ong is a male entrepreneur born in mainland China in the late 1930s. He and his family moved to Hong Kong in the late 1940s, and he immigrated to the U.S. during his early teenage years. He graduated from two of the nation's top private universities with a B.S. in engineering and an MBA degree. He was working part time during most of his education and had minimal time for volunteering. He is married and has two children. He serves on the boards of high schools, universities, and cultural institutions. Until now, he has given approximately \$90 million to charity; 70% has been dedicated to education, and about 20% of that amount supports higher education causes. Other donations benefit nonprofit organizations focusing on culture, health, and environmental causes.

### *Pan*

Pan was born in the late 1950s in Taiwan. After completing his B.S. from a Taiwanese university, he moved to the U.S. for his graduate degrees. He graduated from a public university, where he received fellowships, with an M.S. degree. He earned his Ph.D. from a renowned public university in the States. He is married. He is currently a president and chief executive officer of a multimedia technology management firm. His philanthropic contributions benefited his and his family's alma mater, schools, as well as an APA nonprofit organization focusing on Chinese American issues. Notably, 80% of his life-time donations have benefited U.S. higher education.

### *Rong*

Rong is a retired physician in his late 70's. He was born in the U.S. and spent several years in Hong Kong during the post-war period. He is married and has children and grandchildren. He received his undergraduate degree from a top public school and obtained his medical degree from a state university. During college, he did not receive any scholarship and had minimal volunteer experiences. He currently serves on more than 40 boards of educational and cultural institutions and has been an influential health advocate for the community. He has given approximately \$1 million, of which half of has been allocated for his family foundation. About 1% of his donations support higher education, and the majority of his charitable giving benefits nonprofit organizations in his neighborhood Chinatown. He has received numerous awards and medals honoring his philanthropic contributions.

### *Sun*

Sun is a retired federal official born and raised in the U.S. He earned his B.S. in engineering from a public university. During college, he did not receive any scholarships and worked part-time jobs. He was not actively involved in volunteering until his retirement age. He spent several years teaching English to students and teachers in rural areas of mainland China. He is separated and has three children. Currently, he is president of an APA nonprofit focusing on Chinese Americans and donates to APA nonprofits to support APA college students. Sun's lifetime giving approximates \$400,000, of which about 95% is dedicated to U.S. higher education.

## **Demographic Characteristics**

This section summarizes noticeable trends of donor characteristics described in the previous section. The section proceeds to divide into four sub-sections regarding participants' 1) demographic information, 2) educational backgrounds, 3) volunteering activities, and 4) awards and medals.

### *Demographic Information*

Fourteen participants interviewed for this study, and the sample included 11 males and 3 females. The majority of these donors were age 50 or above. Cai is a retired scientist in his early 60's. During the interview, Cai shared his views about donors' ages:

I also realize that really most people that I know, they don't give before they're about 50 or 55, until their kids go to college. It's really the later years, the last ten years before they retire, suddenly the mortgage is paid off, the kids have graduated from college, life is suddenly become much easier, then they give money more and more. That's what I feel. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

In Dong's view, a retired business owner and a consultant, Chinese Americans give at a much later age. He said:

Usually people don't give until their kids graduate from schools, after their retirement is settled, which is around the age of 70 or so. By then people start to have a better idea of how much they can give. Until then, people are still very practical, thinking about their kids' and grandkids' education. (Personal Communication, July 2, 2010)

Additionally, all donors except for one were married or separated. They had children who have already grown up, and some even had grandchildren. Looking into their employment status, more than half of the participants were founders and CEOs of the nation's top venture capital firms, specializing in investment management, software

technology, and banking and insurance. Two donors were senior executive officers of the world's largest companies. Others included a retired scientist, a physician, and a federal employee. Overall, donors were located in populous metropolitan city areas, including New York City, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, and Los Angeles. The majority of donors resided in close proximity to his or her alma mater.

Donors' immigration histories follow six distinct patterns. The first group of donors was born in mainland China, their family moved to Taiwan, and then they came to the U.S. for advanced degrees. The second group of donors was born in mainland China, their families immigrated to Hong Kong, and then they came to the U.S. during their adolescent years. The third group of donors was born in Taiwan and immigrated to the U.S. for graduate degrees. The fourth group of donors was native to the U.S., the so-called second generation and beyond. The fifth group of donors was born in the U.S., their family moved back to Hong Kong, and then they returned to the U.S. before college age. The final group of donors was either born or raised outside of the U.S. and China, and came to the U.S. with their family members.

### *Educational Backgrounds*

Overall, donors interviewed for this study were highly educated. All of them earned bachelor degrees, three of which were from Taiwanese universities. Donors' majors in college remained predominantly in the fields of Engineering, Business, and Science. Specifically, seven out of fourteen donors earned their business management degrees, while three others received Ph.D.'s in science and engineering. Only two donors

specialized in social science or humanities, namely in the fields of philosophy and Chinese Studies.

Of the available data, half of donors interviewed received full or partial scholarships during college or graduate school. Those who received scholarships at the undergraduate level continued to procure financial support for their graduate degrees. For student immigrants, scholarships were the only way to afford studies in the U.S. Still, several donors did not receive any financial assistance in college and worked part-time jobs to pay off their educational expenses.

Over the course of undergraduate and graduate student life, donors recalled little to no volunteering experiences. The primary reason was time constraints. Born in mainland China, Kao immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 20. He first attended a local community college and in his junior year, he transferred to a state university. During college, he worked full-time at a gas station and restaurants to cover his tuition. When asked whether he did any volunteer work in college, he said:

You know, during college I worked. I worked and also worked hard at the same time. You just wanted to make enough to do two things. One is so you have some money to spend. At the same time you pay the school fee. At that time I did not have enough resources to even do voluntary work. Voluntary work is more a reflection of your family background. That is if you have a pretty well-to-do family, your parents can support you. So you have time to do [volunteering]. If you don't have money, you have to make a decent living yourself; you just can't do voluntary works. (Personal Communication, July 1, 2010)

Nevertheless, several donors actively engaged in volunteering activities. Dong was born and brought up on the West Coast, and spent most of his life around the neighborhood of San Francisco Chinatown. During his sophomore and junior years, he volunteered as a bilingual instructor working with at-risk kids in Chinatown. Another example is Guo.

She majored in economics and Chinese Studies at a women's college before getting her MBA from a private university. During college, she was involved with a number of volunteer activities, one of which includes the Economic Club where she and other members facilitated a speakership series of business leaders. Also, she served as the vice president of the Asian student organization.

### *Volunteer Activities*

Currently, all of the donors interviewed for this study engage in volunteer activities. The vast majority of them were affiliated with university organizations, including alumni associations, advisory boards, and university foundations. In fact, two of them were founding members of Asian American alumni associations. Fang is a founding member of his alma mater's Asian Alumni Club in the Los Angeles area. Several years after graduation, the group began meeting on a voluntary basis. He said, "We all live in the LA area. We started growing. First we started with ten. We do picnics together. We do dinners. Now we have maybe 60 to 80" (Personal Communication, May 11, 2010). As the membership grew, the university started making efforts to reach out. When asked if the club had any existing contact with the university, Fang said, "No! They don't even know. That's why the university is very happy that I'm doing this!" (Personal Communication, May 11, 2010)

Another donor, Chu, is a co-founder of his alma mater's Asian Alumni Association as well as the campus-wide alumni association. To Chu, his involvement with the Asian Alumni Association reconnected him with the alma mater, after more than

two decades of fragmentation. When asked how he became involved in these alumni functions, he said:

One day some woman from the university's Office of Alumni Relations, she called up, I don't know where she got my name from but she said they might be other Asian alumni who might be interested in forming an Asian alumni group. It was 1995, and said will you be interested in getting together and talking about it. So I said sure. We did have kind of a common interest and we thought that Asian alumni group kind of makes sense. It might be a good affinity group that might help Asian alumni connects back with the university. So we did form this Asian Alumni Association in 1995... And the university recognized us, sort of encouraged us. So we got bigger and that forced my involvement. Once you get involved one way by it seems they will find you because there aren't many alumni at least at Teal University who are active or participate. So because of that I got involved with Engineering School again somewhat with the business school, even with parts of the university at the university level. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

Similar to Chu, many donors served on boards of individual departments. Ma and Cai served on advisory boards as corporate representatives, managing corporate gifts and collaborative research initiatives. Han serves on the advisory board of a science center. He oversees his gift operations and provides strategic advice for program development. Fang, on the other hand, was approached directly by the University president to support the internship program that is part of the university's largest private contribution.

At the administrative level, donors served on the board of trustees and board of regency. In addition to numerous board memberships, Lu has been appointed to serve on a board of regency. When asked about her role in the board of regency, she said:

Now I am on the Regents Board, now I realize that the policy actually comes from the Regents. No matter how much the chancellor wants to be on doing the policy, they can't be doing policy. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

A business owner and a founder of a nonprofit organization, Han served on the advisory board to give strategic and management advice for the program he sponsored. When asked if the gift triggered the board appointment, he said:

That's a good question... As a result of my gift, I had discussions with the Faculty Director and Executive Director to make sure that my gift was being used in a way that I would have input, and so we created this position of Senior Advisor so that I could provide strategic advice on how those programs could be implemented in the most cost-effective way. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

Several donors became a member of university foundations. After his generous gifts to his alma mater, Ma was invited to serve on the university foundation. He said:

So many years later when I was a Chief Financial Officer at this company, I got called on by the university. The development office somehow located me. I think what they did was that they noticed from the alumni association that I was donating this amount of money, and it qualified me to be what's called a foundation member. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

Cai and Fang, both graduates of a Taiwanese private university, serve on the U.S.-based Taiwanese university foundation. Within the foundation spectrum, they engaged in fundraising activities to expand memberships and support all across the state. Cai explained:

We meet once a year, we have telephone conferences about four times a year talking about strategies, and how we convince alumni to donate. And actually, we brainstorm and try to gather information about top 40 graduates who have the potential to donate \$100,000 and more. Those are the targets. They are all from Indigo University graduates. And, we focus on personal relationships if they are nearby in San Francisco. I give them a call and talk to them, try to get them interested in supporting Indigo University. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

In addition to university-related organizations, donors affiliated with a wide range of nonprofit organizations. Female donors engaged in women's associations, including the

Smithsonian Women's Committee, San Francisco Foundation, Women's Forum West, Ernst & Young, and American Women's Economic Development. Other donors procured board memberships at professional associations, ranging from the Asian American Manufacturers' Association and the Chinese Institute of Engineers/USA to the California Medical Association. Additionally, the majority of donors remained actively involved in Asian American community organizations. This included the Committee of 100, the Organization of Chinese Americans, and the Asia Foundation. Several others have become supporters of art and museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Arts, the San Francisco Asian Art Museum, and the San Jose Chinese Performing Arts Center.

### *Honors and Awards*

As an acknowledgement of their contributions, donors received honors and awards from recipient institutions. Several donors received alumni awards that celebrate their lifelong involvement and dedication to a school. Kao is a recipient of the Alumnus of the Year Award. When asked if this award is an acknowledgement of his gifts, he said:

I think it's probably the reason. Before, I actually supported this scholarship at the Teal University. I supported scholarship, and I also supported this part of their program, annual programs. I am still supporting some of their programs right now. So I have been a reasonable supporter of Teal University. (Personal Communication, July 1, 2010)

Other donors have received awards from national and local nonprofit organizations that celebrate their philanthropic accomplishments. Notable among them is Rong, a retired physician and a noted philanthropist within Asian American communities. Until now, he has served on the boards of more than 40 nonprofit organizations and that of his alma

mater. Throughout his life, he received numerous awards and medals from each of these institutions. One of the most prestigious awards includes the Lifetime Achievement in Philanthropy Award. The Association of Fundraising Professionals nominated Rong for his lifetime charitable engagement as well as his roles in philanthropic leadership in the Chinese American community.

In review, donor profiles demonstrate several notable characteristics of the donors interviewed for this study. Donors were more often male than female, and most were married and had children. The majority of donors were in their fifties or above, and some already had approached their retirement age. Many of the donors interviewed for this study owned venture capital firms, while several others were senior officers of international corporations, a physician, and a federal employee. The immigration history of each of these donors presented mixed stories; at different times in life, donors moved back and forth from the U.S. and China for educational and familial reasons. Generally speaking, donors were highly educated individuals. All of the participants earned bachelor degrees or higher; several earned MBA's or Ph.D.'s. Donors majored predominantly in the fields of science, engineering, and business, and were less likely to major in the humanities or social science. During college, several donors received scholarships or fellowships, while others self-financed their education. Volunteer activities during college were less common among many of the donors. For most of them, voluntary commitments started at a later age. Currently, all of donors interviewed for this study serve on boards of university and nonprofit organizations. Some donors in fact helped form alumni associations at the alma mater, while others currently serve on advisory boards, university foundations, and boards of trustees to provide strategic

advices. One donor served on a board of regency to oversee policy decisions of local universities and colleges. Recipient institutions recognized these donors' voluntary contributions through prestigious awards and medals.

### **How Do Donors Learn the Concept of Philanthropy?**

Donors interviewed for this study supported a wide range of philanthropic causes beyond U.S. higher education. To name a few, they have given to Chinese and Taiwanese universities, American elementary and secondary schools, museums, hospitals, and Asian American community organizations. While philanthropic motivations for each of these gifts vary, it is important to understand how donors learn fundamental concepts of philanthropy and how donors acquire a sense of the value of giving and helping others. The following analysis of interview data revealed three key factors that formed philanthropic beliefs and values: familial, cultural, and societal influences.

#### **Family Influences of Philanthropic Beliefs and Values**

Chinese American donors interviewed for this study distilled their core values of philanthropy from their parents, grandparents, or even great-grandparents. Their generosity to others influenced donors' maturing beliefs, which became the core foundation of their philanthropic contributions today.

A case in point is Rong, a retired physician and a founder of a family foundation. Growing up, his parents taught him the value of philanthropy, as expressed in the Chinese saying, "in a moment of happiness, don't forget to give to charity" (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010). Rong's parents were owners of a small grocery store in

the local Chinatown. With their limited resources, they helped causes that supported community development. Even in her early 90's, Rong's mother raised money to support an elementary school in mainland China. Influenced substantially by both of his parents, Rong joined a local progressive youth organization. More recently, he established a charitable foundation in memory of his father. The foundation finances educational and cultural causes, mostly in the Chinatown area. As mentioned above, Rong has served on more than 40 nonprofit organizations. Additionally, he has been serving as the health advocate for the community, mentoring younger physicians and Asian Americans. When asked about the origin of his philanthropic beliefs, he said:

Well, it starts with the values your parents have. My parents always felt, "We're part of the community, and we should always give to the community to help them, to improve themselves or ourselves as part of that." They were giving a lot of money to progressive causes, so it's part of their reason. So, for example, the money they make in a grocery store in a large part goes to support a number of causes. (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010)

For Lu, her family tradition of philanthropy goes back to her great grandfather. Lu is a founder and CEO of a private investment company. She was born in the U.S., and while she grew up in Hong Kong, there were many strong Western influences in her youth. Three of her grandparents received education overseas; one grandfather attended a university in the U.S. and the other grandfather and one grandmother received education in Europe. Influenced by her family's belief in American education, Lu's generation was mostly U.S.-educated. After graduating from an American public university, Lu assumed a more active role in the local community. She now serves on the boards of universities, cultural institutions, and community organizations. When asked about the environment

in which she grew up, she shared her discovery of her great grandfather's philanthropy.

She said:

Even back in my great grandfather's time, we came across kind of a letter of wishes in which it talks about charity, how some properties will be set aside and designated for charities, the income which would be designated for charities, and then he lists in order of priority which charities should be patronized... The first priority for charity was to help people in natural disasters. You know this is all in your area, in your province. Then the second was to feed the hungry, the third was health, and the fourth was education. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

During the interview, Lu touched upon her grandfather's philanthropy. She said:

I always knew that philanthropy was deeply rooted in my family and was a core value. When my grandfather died I was fifteen. We had a typical Chinese funeral where we sat in the funeral home, and people came to pay their respects. And, on the day of the funeral, I was actually amazed because so many delegations from charity came to pay their last respects. These were charities that I didn't have anything to do with. But, you know clearly he must have been a major donor because otherwise they wouldn't bother to come to the funeral. That really impressed me. Because, I knew that he did many civic things, and I knew that he was philanthropic, but he was very quiet about so many things that he gave to. I was actually quite close to him but I didn't know any this. He never talked to me about it. So I always knew that that was a core value for us. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

In addition to generational roots, exposure to civic environment further reinforced donors' beliefs in philanthropy. Philanthropists interviewed for this study engaged in a variety of volunteer activities. Han is an executive director of an investment company and a second generation philanthropist. Han derived his philanthropic values primarily from his father and secondarily from his voluntary experiences during college. Han's father was an influential supporter of Asian American youth organizations. By supporting internship programs at senators' offices, he helped increase political awareness among younger generations of Asian Americans. He also supported

democratic government in his homeland, Taiwan. Han shared, “My father was a very big role model in terms of my development” (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010).

Growing up, he saw his father’s contributions to the community, and he feels that he is now “following those footsteps” (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010). During college, Han became involved with the Asian American Law Student Association, dedicated to encourage awareness of Asian American justice issues. More recently, Han established a nonprofit organization to support educational and environmental causes throughout the country.

In addition to voluntary involvement, three donors noted that their schools explicitly cultivated philanthropic and volunteer behaviors. The schools’ emphasis on philanthropy reinforced donors’ family values of personal philanthropy toward more organized, institutional philanthropy. A case in point is Ong, an entrepreneur, third generation philanthropist and a founder of domestic and international nonprofit organizations. During his interview, he mentioned that a core value of philanthropy derives primarily from his family tradition. He said:

It’s really part of the family values if you will. I believe I now learn that it goes back at least to my grandfather, but I didn’t know that at the time. It was certainly communicated by my parents that if one is well-off, that one has the obligation to deal with people who are less fortunate and things like hunger and also very heavily education. (Personal Communication, June 17, 2010)

During high school, his philanthropic attitude transformed and solidified. Established in the late eighteenth century, the school spirit celebrated the idea of openness and equity. According to Ong, this is one of the only need-blind secondary education institutions in the nations. Recalling back on his educational experiences, Ong said:

The school seal is the phrase “non sibi” which is Latin, which means not for self. These were values that were very much inculcated through the family, my family. Obviously, in China, that meant individual philanthropy. You had to take responsibility to helping the poor, helping with people’s education if you had the resources. In the U.S., that translated into really institutional philanthropy. It’s philanthropy rather than being done on the personal bases. It’s really done through charitable organizations. (Personal Communication, June 17, 2010)

Generational heritage for philanthropy met philanthropy as supported by institutions.

Cross-pollinated traditions and organized philanthropy reinforced Ong’s values of philanthropy. Currently, he holds leadership roles in a number of nonprofit organizations.

His gifts benefit educational institutions at secondary and post-secondary levels, as well as cultural institutions and community organizations. All in all, philanthropic value emerged within donors’ family units and developed under the influence of Western experiences in their youth, including volunteer activities and exposure to American school spirits of philanthropy.

### **Cultural Influences of Philanthropic Beliefs and Values**

The second influence on philanthropic beliefs stems from Chinese culture and traditions. Donors believed that the concept of philanthropy remains pervasive in almost every culture. They stated that Chinese obligation to give back to parents translated as the core value of philanthropy. Kao is a philanthropist and a founder of a private laboratories company. Raised by relatively traditional parents and having immigrated to the U.S. in his early 20’s, Kao embraced both Chinese and American cultures. When asked how he learned the concept of giving, he said:

That’s pretty human to me. Just like in Asia, they always, especially in Chinese culture, they always think that the most natural thing you ask about the Chinese culture, people give back to their parents. Parents always want to give everything

to the kids, so they want to give back to their parents. This is very natural. They do not have a tradition of giving money to society because there's no reliable, dependable institution to give the money to. So they give back to parents. It's very human or traditional. (Personal Communication, July 1, 2010)

Nevertheless, in Kao's view, Chinese philanthropy is less structured as compared to the American system incorporating tax policies and nonprofit sectors. Kao continued:

You asked the question of where this idea came from. The idea is quite natural. You got it [wealth] from this society so you give back to the parents and directly to the society. Second of course is the tradition, right? That is how the traditions occur in this [U.S.] culture. They make it much easier because of tax and law as well. You set the tax law to facilitate that, make it easier, so that a lot of people do it. (Personal Communication, July 1, 2010)

Donors believed that Chinese culture promotes philanthropy, and Chinese Americans do give. Philanthropic beliefs exist across different cultures, and Chinese is no exception. Though Chinese philanthropy is less structured as compared to that in America, Chinese culture and heritage taught donors to give back to their parents as well as in larger contexts.

### **Societal Influences of Philanthropic Beliefs and Values**

Another factor involved donors' perceptions of inherent philanthropy; that is, it is not naturally acquired from family or cultural backgrounds. Rather, their philanthropic beliefs evolved as they became more involved in American civic society.

Two former student immigrants mentioned that they learned the concept when adapting to U.S. society. A case in point is Cai, a retired scientist, who has given tremendous amounts to political, educational, and cultural causes. He emigrated from Taiwan in the early 70's to pursue his advanced degrees. After he received his M.S.,

Ph.D., and postdoctoral degrees in the U.S., he procured a researcher position at the nation's leading research institution and continued his career in two of the nation's top companies. When asked how he learned the concept of philanthropy, he said:

After being in this country long enough, you hear people giving, and it came rather naturally. I have to say actually, a very early one was my company always supported drives for the United Way. Every year United Way had to pick someone as a representative for each department, so very early in 1990 I was picked by the boss and he said, "OK, you do the fund drive." So, that's the first time I guess I knocked on people's door and say this time and again... and that was my first involvement. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

Similarly, Fang is a former student immigrant from Taiwan who came to pursue his graduate degree. After he immigrated to the U.S., he converted to Christianity with influence from his wife. Regarding his philanthropic beliefs, he said, "I think it's because I'm a Christian. Christianity teaches you how to be giving. I feel just like the Christian saying, I mean, giving is better than receiving" (Personal Communication, May 11, 2010).

Even among some native Chinese Americans, philanthropic beliefs did not emerge until they got much more involved in the issues of their community. Chu was born and grew up in New York's Chinatown and is now a senior analyst of one of the world's largest companies. To Chu, his philanthropic value is not familiarly or culturally driven. When asked how he learned about philanthropy, he said:

I don't think my family or the community. There was no overt support for public organizations. I think in Chinatown they had mutually self-supportive family associations where people dump money, and they can use it when they needed it. So, it's a mutual support, but it wasn't charity. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

Growing up in Chinatown and observing the activities of the family association failed to awaken Chu's philanthropic beliefs. Rather, its development related to his voluntary experiences during college. He said:

I was active as a student in the [APA nonprofit] of which I am the president of the board now. When I was a student, an MBA Candidate, I had done some volunteer work there. That's anti-poverty social services organizations. You can say that's a form of charity from the government to help poor immigrants and people like that, disadvantaged families. So, there you see the need for funding whether it comes from individuals, corporations, foundations, or the government. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

For Sun, philanthropic beliefs emerged at a much later point in life, around his retirement age. Sun is a retired federal employee and a generous supporter of Asian American community organizations. His parents were immigrants in the mid-1930s and owned a small grocery store in the Midwest. The family lived in absolute poverty, and Sun had to work his way through college to pay off his education. The turning point came right around his retirement age when he took a voluntary teaching position at a school in an impoverished region of mainland China. This experience was a reawakening in terms of his identity reconstruction. After he came back to the U.S., he became involved more actively with Asian American community organizations, continuously supporting younger generations of Asian descendants. In the spectrum of discussing his volunteer activities during college, he discussed how he acquired a concept of philanthropy. He said:

All of this came just very late in my life. I suspect it's that way for lots of Chinese who grew up in grocery stores, laundries, and restaurants and so forth where we really scrape out a living. I think it was the furthest thing from our minds to help anybody else because we are just so busy getting by on our own. So I had no concept of helping others at that time. All I could do was to get by, by myself. I didn't come by this philosophy of philanthropy because it was given to me. It's

something that just developed as I became part of the community and realizing that there are others in our community maybe unlike me that could use some help and really don't know how to get it. That's what I guess my giving sort of stands for. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

While some donors had little to no philanthropic beliefs during childhood, voluntary involvement with mainstream American society supplied philanthropic attitudes. Former student immigrants adopted different aspects from American cultures of philanthropy through increased presence in the civic American society.

This section portrayed several layers of Chinese American philanthropic perceptions. All in all, Chinese American donors' beliefs in philanthropy are not only intrinsic but also extrinsic. Some donors inherited the concept from their parents or cultural traditions while others learned the value of giving via increased involvement in American civil society.

However, these philanthropic beliefs do not automatically produce monetary contributions. People with innate philanthropic desires might be hesitant about making financial gifts. Donors' motivations to support charitable causes are incredibly complex. While the fundamental conceptions about philanthropy discussed in this section remain consistent, donors exemplify multiple incentives to give. Even within educational causes, philanthropic motivations are diverse and depend on giving purposes and destinations.

The focus of this study lies in determining the philanthropic motivations of Chinese Americans to give specifically to U.S. higher education. Before further analysis in the next chapter, the following section reviews patterns of Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education.

## **Chinese American Giving Patterns to U.S. Higher Education**

Donors interviewed for this study gave a wide range of gifts to support U.S. higher education. By scrutinizing information about giving purposes and destinations, this section attempts to answer the question on how Chinese Americans give to American higher education. More detailed patterns of giving for each subject is summarized in Table 4.1 (p. 94). Highlighted colors represent the major themes discussed in the following sections.

**Table 4.1 Chinese American Giving Patterns to U.S. Higher Education**

	Cai	Chu	Dong	Fang	Guo	Han	Kao	Liu	Lu	Ma	Ong	Pan	Rong	Sun
<b>Giving Purposes</b>														
Scholarship	O	O	O			O	O		O	O	O		O	O
Professorship	O							O	O		O	O		
Campus Buildings/Rooms	O						O	O	O	O	O	O		
Program Development			O			O					O			
Annual Gifts	O	O		O	O	O				O	O		O	
Parent Fund					O									
University Leadership					O				O					
Athletic Department													O	
<b>Gift Restrictions</b>														
Restricted Gifts	O		O		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Unrestricted Gifts	O	O		O	O	O				O			O	O
<b>Gifts to Chinese and Asian American Causes</b>														
Giving to Chinese and Asian American Causes	O		O	O				O	O	O	O			O
Giving to non-Chinese and Asian American Causes	O	O		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
<b>Type of Institutions</b>														
Alma-mater (self - current)	O	O	O	O	O		O	O	O	O	O	O	O	
Alma-mater (self- past)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Alma-mater (family)			O		O		O		O		O	O		
Non-alma mater						O								O
<b>Gift Destinations by Department</b>														
Business		O					O	O	O	O				
Engineering		O							O					
Science	O		O			O	O		O			O		
Medicine			O						O					
Psychology						O								
History											O			
Sociology											O			
Chinese Studies			O											
Arts			O								O			
Library							O			O				
Journalism									O					
Campus General	O	O		O	O	O		O			O		O	
Others										O				O

*Note.* Others include individual or organizational gifts to college students.

## **Giving Purposes**

Chinese American gifts from this study's participants ranged from several thousand to millions of dollars. In general, Chinese American donors appreciated endowment giving as opposed to providing funds for immediate use. More particularly, these gifts were dedicated to universities for different purposes, including scholarship programs, professorships, campus building and facilities, and annual funds.

First and foremost, Chinese American gifts supported scholarship programs. These scholarships were allocated to the general body of students, particularly for those pursuing advanced degrees. For instance, Cai supported a science Ph.D. scholarship program in memory of his mentor, while Lu's gift supported studies of international Chinese students pursuing Ph.D. degrees in science. Kao's gift funded a scholarship and annual scientific symposia at his alma mater.

Additionally, Chinese American donors gave for professorships. For instance, Ong endowed a professorship in the sociology department at a private university. Liu's and Lu's gifts funded visiting Chinese scholars programs at each of their alma maters. Liu's million-dollar gift enabled a business school to host Chinese academic or business leaders, while Lu's gift enabled Chinese journalists to study at a school of journalism.

Chinese American major gifts further funded campus buildings and facilities. Ma's \$25,000 gift to his alma mater provided a breakout room for students in business schools. On a larger scale, Liu's 25 million-dollar gift to her alma mater enabled the construction of a new campus center. Ong provided a million-dollar gift to establish a new art museum gallery at his wife's alma mater.

Most of the donors interviewed for this study have given or are continuing to support annual funds at the alma mater. These gifts, given via class reunions, alumni memberships, or board memberships, supported a broad range of university operations.

### **Giving Destinations**

Chinese American gifts benefited donors' or their family's alma mater. While the amount of donations ranged from thousands to millions, all of the donors interviewed for this study have previously supported their alma mater. An interesting fact to note here is that two donors—Sun and Han—no longer support their alma mater but instead give to institutions with which they have no personal or family ties. Sun gave individually to Chinese students studying at U.S. universities while Han's gift supported science and psychology programs at local universities.

Eleven donors gave restricted gifts, supporting particular causes at universities. Fewer numbers of donors—three out of fourteen—only gave unrestricted gifts benefiting general university and college environments. Half of the donors interviewed funded programs or scholarships related to Chinese and Chinese American causes. A larger number of participants—twelve out of fourteen—benefited non-Chinese or Asian American specific causes; these donations targeted individual departments, specifically in the fields of business, science, technology, engineering, and medicine. While fewer gifts benefited the fields of humanities and social science, two donors remained generous to visual and performing art programs. As a matter of fact, no gift supported causes in the field of education. Additionally, gifts to alumni funds supported general causes at university campus. A few donations occurred outside of the university spectrum, as

donors gave to college students individually or through Asian American nonprofit organizations.

A review of Chinese American patterns of giving to U.S. higher education presents notable characteristics. All in all, Chinese American donors generated endowment funds to support affiliated institutions, departments, and causes. More specifically, donors interviewed for this study supported scholarships, professorships, building and educational facilities, and annual funds. Their gifts were mostly restricted, solely dedicated to individual departments and causes. Not many of the donations were ethnic-specific, but several donors gave to support Chinese and Chinese American faculty and students. Recipient institutions were predominantly donors' or their family members' alma mater with only two exceptional cases.

Examining the destination of giving, Chinese American gifts strictly targeted business, engineering, and science departments. Only a few donations benefited fields in humanities and social sciences. Interestingly, such trends match donors' educational backgrounds; while many donors interviewed for this study majored in business or STEM fields and procured university board memberships, fewer numbers of donors affiliated with humanities and liberal art.

A review of patterns of Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education provides critical implications for university communities. Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education reflects the socio-economic backgrounds of donor individuals as well as their educational ties to universities and colleges. Accordingly, donors were more likely to give endowment funds to affiliated causes, departments, or institutions. Yet, the discussion is incomplete without exploring the central question of why Chinese American

donors give to these selective areas, institutions, and via particular channels. The proceeding chapter explores driving forces underlying Chinese American gifts to U.S. higher education.

## **CHAPTER 5: PHILANTHROPIC MOTIVATIONS OF CHINESE AMERICAN GIVING TO U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION**

This chapter discusses the complexity of Chinese American donor motivations. Why do Chinese Americans give to U.S. higher education specifically? What motivates donors to give to a cause at U.S. universities and colleges? The review of interview data reveals Chinese American donor behaviors that relate specifically to donor individuals, including their altruistic desire to support American society, the psychological satisfaction of giving, and desires for personal benefits. Additionally, donors interviewed for this study possessed institutional, communal, and personal attachments to a cause. In other words, donors demonstrated personal attachments to alma maters, to the Chinese and Asian American communities, and to their charitable gifts. In alignment with above mentioned factors, additional cultural factors shaped Chinese American donor behaviors. Donors demonstrated a strong belief in education, particularly the value of American higher education. Also, Chinese American giving reflects the traditions of filial piety, family and fraternal relationships, all of which largely influenced donor motivations.

### **Sense of Duty to Support American Society**

Chinese Americans give to U.S. higher education because of societal obligations. They feel a sense of duty to give back to society. Kao was born in mainland China. When he was eight years old, he moved to Hong Kong with his mother and siblings. Soon after he turned 20 years old, he joined his father in the U.S. His acculturation process in the U.S. was filled with hardships. He first enrolled in a teacher's college to improve his English skills. During his junior year, he transferred to a state public

university to obtain his B.S. degree. Throughout his college life, he worked at restaurants and gas stations to pay for his tuition. After college, he received a partial scholarship to pursue his graduate degrees at a private university. Currently, Kao is a founder and CEO of a private biotechnology firm. Looking back, he thinks that America shaped the person he is today. He thinks that he truly benefited from countless educational and professional opportunities in American society. Now that he is successful and has a capacity to give, he thinks it is his obligation to give back. Until now, Kao funded scholarship programs and seminars in biotechnology at his alma mater. More recently, his donation financed the library renovation in the medical department at his wife's alma mater. When asked why he gives to higher education specifically, he said:

To think about value, I look at it from this perspective: first of all, you ask me about my loyalty to where I came from, and I said the U.S. Of course it is the U.S. because the reason is I got most of my education here, my business experiences here, and my wealth accumulated here. So when you put all these three things together, it's not unreasonable to know that I would like to give back to the society that gave me the most. That's why I thought it's very important for me to give back to society. Giving back to society is to say, I got it from society here, I want to give back here. That's the basic premise in most people's mind.  
(Personal Communication, July 1, 2010)

Notably, this sense of duty directs Chinese American giving to American institutions.

Dong is a retired consultant and an entrepreneur. Originally from Taiwan, he has been living in the local Chinatown area for more than two decades. Growing up closely with his father and his aunt who were both performers, he nurtured his passion for the performing arts. While still in high school, he established a dance school in his neighborhood. During college, he worked as a social worker with at-risk youth in the Chinese American community. Today, he is a generous supporter of U.S. higher education. At a public university, he has donated restrictively to the Chinese performing

arts program. When asked why he supported American higher education specifically, he said, “I want to help my descendants achieve and survive” (Personal Communication, July 2, 2010). He continued, “But the question is, ‘Who are my descendants?’” Dong noted that his descendants will not come to Chinatown. They will come to universities or Asian art museums. That is the reason why he gives to those causes. Additionally, his descendants will be influenced by the West. That’s why, according to Dong, “When you give, you have to give within the Western context” (Personal Communication, July 2, 2010).

This notion of giving for the collective good is an example of altruism, a strong desire to give for the collective good. Ma is a CFO of one of the world’s largest companies. As a company representative, he manages corporate giving. More recently, his company launched a quarter-million-dollar scholarship program to support American college students of Asian and Pacific Islander descents. Ma’s gift to higher education includes a quarter-million dollars to his alma mater for a breakout room renovation.

When asked about his motivation to give, Ma said:

I don’t know whether its Asian culture or I suppose it’s an aspect of Christian culture. You know there’s a supreme being. We’re not here just to, let’s say, eat and sort of live our lives. There’s a greater will or benefit or something out there that I think that overall, society benefits if you participate in society, and try to do things really to help. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

All in all, Chinese Americans felt grateful for their achievements and desired to create equivalent opportunities for the next generation. Cai emigrated from Taiwan to pursue his advanced graduate degrees. With his post-doctoral degree in chemistry, he developed a successful scientific career across several of the U.S.’s largest corporations. Though not his primary motive, Cai acknowledged his desire to return his wealth to society. He

said, “I believe that you know those who have taken care of themselves and their family should really take care of less fortunate people” (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

Among the “less fortunate people,” donors targeted female students and professionals. Guo is a graduate of a women’s college and a co-founder and managing director of a wealth management firm. To her, giving to her alma mater satisfies her desire to support the next generation of women. It is simply the feeling of knowing that she is helping the next generation. Her donations aim to empower female students to follow paths of success, one of which Guo and her descendants have already taken.

Clearly, motivations of Chinese American giving incorporate a sense of duty. Donors shared gratitude for educational, economic, and societal opportunities obtained in the States. They believe these experiences cultivated their paths to their current successes. Because of educational and professional training, as well as wealth accumulated in the U.S., donors felt a strong obligation to give back and help the next generation climb the ladder of success.

### **Donors’ Desires for Personal Benefits**

Beyond societal obligations to serve American communities, Chinese American donors revealed more personal, strategic, and self-interested aspects of giving behaviors. This includes donors’ preference for tax benefits, naming opportunities, and strengthened values of diplomas.

## **Tax Benefits**

While not emphasized explicitly during interviews, tax deduction attracted Chinese American donations. U.S. tax law states that charitable donations to qualified nonprofit organizations are tax-deductible. In fact, all donors interviewed for this study gave tax-deductible gifts. They gave via 501C nonprofit organizations, typically university foundations or private nonprofit foundations. For gifts to Chinese universities, they gave through U.S.-based organizations that guarantee tax deductions. A generous supporter of American and Taiwanese universities, Cai listed tax-benefit as fourth out of five of his philanthropic motivations. Accordingly, his gifts to American institutions were tax-deductible. Additionally, he gave to a Taiwanese alma mater through a U.S.-based alumni foundation. When asked if tax-deduction is a strong motivator, he said:

I think it is. With a tax bracket, for most people if you make more than quarter million, your tax bracket is supposed to deduct 40%. So if I give a thousand dollars, I lost only, out of my pocket, \$600, so you know, and in CA, you have 33% federal tax, 9% state. So you're talking about 42%. That's huge. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

To Chinese American major donors, tax deduction policy is not a primary but a secondary motivator to support American higher education. In other words, tax benefits alone did not motivate Chinese Americans but did determine the channel of giving. When donors gave, they preferred to give in such a way that gifts were tax-deductible. This is the reason why giving to Chinese universities occurred through U.S. based foundations. As Rong said, "If you have to give money to Uncle Sam anyway, you could have given in a way that you believe is a good thing that you're doing" (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010).

## **Naming Opportunities**

Naming opportunities generated a strong incentive for Chinese Americans to give. Though not explicitly emphasized in individual interviews, all mega-gift donations over ten million dollars were named after donors or their family members. Ong is an established investor and a third generation philanthropist. During the interview, he described two primary focuses of giving: Chinese art culture and education. Until now, he has given to more than ten universities in the U.S. Among the recipients of his gifts is the women's college from which his late wife graduated. In memory of his late wife, he donated a record-breaking 25 million dollar gift for the establishment of a museum and art gallery.

Similarly, Lu's gifts to her alma mater honored her family heritage. She is a fourth-generation philanthropist. Beginning with her great-grandfather, Lu and her family have dedicated incredible resources to charitable giving. Recipients of her family contributions include Lu's and her sister's alma mater. Her family gave another major gift when the university promoted a Chinese American to a high ranking leadership position. Several years later, they gave another million-dollar gift for the renovation of a medical center. This was a naming opportunity. Referring to a previous conversation with the official, she said:

And then two three years later after we got to know [leader] better he asked us to make a contribution to the health center... he really needed outside support because they didn't have enough money. So he asked us to help him and so we did. It was a naming opportunity. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

Other Chinese American major donors named their gifts after themselves and their significant others. To name a few, Liu named her record-breaking 25 million dollar gift

after herself and her husband, Pan named his 15 million dollar gift after himself and his wife, and Ma named his quarter million dollar gift after himself and his wife.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that several donors preferred generosity over publicity. When asked about the importance of naming opportunities, Ma said:

In some cases yes, but they don't have to name it. When you see a room, how many times do you ask yourself, "Who's that person?" Don't have any idea. Don't care. It's not about getting to see your name. It's just that somebody says thank you. That's all. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

Similarly, naming opportunities are not a primary factor for Cai. When he gave to his alma mater in Taiwan, the university put up a plaque to honor him. He felt grateful, but what mattered more to him was not whether the general public saw his name, but rather, acknowledgement from his fellow classmates about his success and generosity. He said:

I don't know how I care about everyone reading my name there. I guess it's more for my graduate class of 40 people. I think that's probably more important for them to know. I'd like to, in a way, want to hope this way is an example, they can give too. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

### **Making College Degrees Valuable**

The majority of Chinese American gifts targeted alma maters. While multiple motivations influence alumni giving, Chu's point of view offers perspective. Chu is a banker who spent his entire life in New York City. Since the late 1990s, two decades after his graduation, he has become more actively involved in alumni functions. He was one of the founders of the Asian alumni club and a campus-wide alumni association. He serves on the boards of the business and engineering schools and supports causes in these schools. When asked why he gave to the alma mater, he discussed the personal benefit of advancing the school's reputation. That is, improved prestige of his alma mater would gradually elevate the value of his diploma. He said:

Teal University's reputation... back in the early 1970s and had the Vietnam War and there were a lot of protests here. They had a lot of problems with maintaining the campus, so the reputation was slipping. But then, overtime it became stronger. I think by giving you sense that you are helping through strengthening Teal University and maintaining its reputation which makes sure your diploma is that much more valuable. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

Clearly, Chinese American giving emerged from personal incentives. Major gift donors named their gifts after themselves, their significant others, and their family heritage. It is important to note that Chinese American gifts were not named after donor individuals but rather family units. Additionally, gifts to donors' alma maters strengthened the reputation of schools and consequently elevated the value of donors' diplomas. Though not a strong incentive, tax deduction generated positive effects on Chinese American giving. Giving to universities in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong was conducted through U.S.-based foundations which are tax-deductible.

### **Self-Satisfaction and the “Joy-of-Giving” Regarding Giving**

From a psychological point of view, Chinese Americans tied gifts to personal satisfaction, a so-called “joy of giving.” Donors felt blessed to have the financial capacity to give, and they believed strongly that helping others was the right thing to do. A case in point is Cai. As a philanthropist, he has given to a wide variety of areas, ranging from political, cultural, to religious causes both in Taiwan and the U.S. When asked specifically about his gifts to U.S. higher education, he highlighted a sense of self-satisfaction. He said:

I don't think I have made that much contribution. I just feel that money-wise it's really not a whole lot. It's really not a whole lot in percentage of what my income.

I feel it's something that is right basically. It's just the right thing to do (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

Similarly, Liu's giving to her alma mater involved personal satisfaction. A graduate of a women's college, she has supported her alma mater financially and physically. Besides serving on the university's board of trustees, her recent gift to the alma mater includes a record-breaking 25 million dollar gift allocated for the establishment of a campus center. When asked about her philanthropic motivation, she addressed her beliefs in giving. She said:

I think whenever I can give and can make a difference, it's a great joy. I'd rather give a gift to a school or the churches rather than buy a trinket or something self-indulgent. Because I think it's such a joy to give, and we live comfortably, we don't lack anything, I'd much rather spend it on others than give myself another treat. I don't need that anymore. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

Chinese American donors shared positive feelings about the impact of giving. To them, institutional acknowledgement was not the primary motivator. Rather, what mattered more was the perceived impact of gifts to the society; donors upheld a belief that recipients would appreciate the opportunities the gift created. Fang was born in China and moved to Taiwan before emigrating to the U.S. for his graduate degree. Once described by his alma mater as the "guy you'd want to take along for business trips in Asia," he is professionally very well networked in the U.S. and Asia. He operates businesses across Asia and the U.S., and throughout the year, he makes multiple trips to and from Asia. Knowing his connections in Asian countries, his alma mater recruited him to the advisory board. According to Fang, he gives "a small amount" to the business school. Aside from his monetary contributions, he supports the school on a voluntarily basis. When the school received a record breaking 40 million dollars from an individual

to expand international programs, Fang helped secure 30 internship positions at companies in Asian countries. Fang recently received an alumni award acknowledging his continuing generosity and dedication to the school. When asked whether the school has acknowledged him in a different way, Fang said:

I don't care really. To me, they ask for my help. Back when I formed this foundation together, for example, or helping the school do this program for example, I know they are appreciative because I did something that a lot of people did not do or cannot do. (Personal Communication, May 11, 2010)

Overall, Chinese American donors shared a "joy of giving." The self-satisfaction of having a capacity to give and to make a difference generated philanthropic behaviors among Chinese Americans to support higher education in the U.S.

### **Reciprocal Incentives from College Experiences**

Chinese American giving was characterized by school loyalty, reciprocal incentives to give back in return for donors' memorable college experiences. The following section reviews donors' incentives related to positive college experiences, financial aid, student-mentor relationships, school philosophies of giving, and time spent with significant others.

#### **Positive College Experiences**

Chinese American alumni gave in return for their positive college experiences. Chinese American donors interviewed for this study attribute today's professional success directly to higher educational opportunities. Participants include immigrants and American natives. Several of them spent adolescent life in overseas countries including

China, India, and Sweden, while some native-born individuals moved to Hong Kong for several years and came back to the U.S. later. Regardless of their different immigration histories, donors felt that college taught them the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to prosper in mainstream American life.

Ma is a CFO of one of the largest companies in the world. A graduate of a public high school, he became a first generation college student in his family. His father was a waiter, and his mother was a factory worker. Since their low-paid jobs generated insufficient funds to support Ma's college education, Ma worked part-time jobs to cover his tuition. Within one generation, his family transitioned from working class to white-collar professionals. When asked why he gives to his alma mater, he explained his gratitude for his undergraduate and graduate education. In response to the question of how he got involved in giving to higher education, he said:

It emanated a little bit primarily from a very positive impression of what school was going to be like. The ability for me to actually enter U.S. society in the business world and actually compete for jobs because I thought the education, what they did for me was really worthwhile. It was a way for me to give back to the community, give back to the institution that I think serves students out of [state] public school system. It was one in which, as I tell people, that maybe I am an outlier. I came out of very unusual circumstances, out of public school systems, went to a state university in [state], and now am one of the CFO's for Azure Company United States. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

Aside from his individual gifts, Ma manages corporate giving targeting his alma mater. More recently, his company launched 20 four-year-scholarships for freshmen students in the business schools. It is interesting to note that in 2006, a majority of these scholarship recipients were minority graduates of public high schools. This further demonstrates the magnitude of Ma's strong gratitude for his educational experiences and his earnest desire

to help the next generation of students who, like himself, struggled with limited opportunities.

Additionally, higher education experiences were of incredible value to former student immigrants, especially those who originally emigrated from Taiwan and Hong Kong for advanced graduate degrees. To them, U.S. universities provided not only scholarly experiences to excel in their fields but also the foundation necessary to adjust to American society. Fang is a former student immigrant from Taiwan. When asked why he gives to higher education in particular, he expressed his gratitude for school experiences. He said, “School teaches you very fundamental knowledge. Especially for foreign students, the first school we go to, we attach to it more because we learn so much about America from the first university” (Personal Communication, May 11, 2010).

In fact, Dong mentioned in his follow-up interview that his lack of positive college experiences discouraged him from supporting his alma mater. Today, only 5% of his charitable contributions are dedicated to U.S. higher education. He said:

Generally I don't give to the university because it is a publically funded institution, and my undergraduate studies there were not very positive. My years on campus were during the Vietnam War period ... so there was no bonding with the university and very little with fellow classmates. I still am in contact with around 100 classmates... almost all Chinese Americans..., but can't think of one that is active with the university and doubt more than five (if any) are donating anything to the campus. If my college experience were different, I might be more active and contribute more. (Personal Communication, February 10, 2011)

### **Received Scholarship or Fellowships during College**

Recipients of scholarships and fellowships showed great generosity to their alma mater. Donors felt that schools paid their way and made tremendous impacts in life. For former student immigrants, scholarships were the only way graduate education in the U.S.

was possible. When asked whether he had received any scholarships, Cai said, “That was the only reason that I could afford to come to this country” (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010).

Chu received scholarships for both his undergraduate and graduate degrees. When asked about his motivation to support his alma mater, he said, “You felt more of affinity, loyalty, and all the good feelings you have about university came to surface. They had paid my way through, so I was grateful for that and decided to give back” (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

Obviously, not all donors interviewed for this study received scholarships. While several donors received financial support from their parents, other donors worked part-time jobs to support their education. A case in point is Sun. Sun’s parents originally emigrated from mainland China in 1930s. The family owned a small grocery in the Midwest in a neighborhood with intense segregation against minorities. Sun explained that his memories of childhood are disjointed: “I don’t think I look back on it finely at all” (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010). After his father passed away when he was eight, his mother single-handedly raised her five children. The family barely earned enough to put food on the table, and sending children to school was never easy. Sun did not go to a school until the fourth grade. When he became the first college student in his family, he worked part-time to pay his tuition. When asked whether he received scholarships in college, he said:

No, I didn’t. I think I would have qualified, but I had no guidance to help me get those scholarships. If a family could do it based on needs, my family certainly could have. That was another thing I realized, that there's lots of students who need help and maybe aren’t smart enough to know how to look for those scholarships. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

Sun continued to give to his alma mater for about ten years after graduation. He currently does not support his alma mater but rather gives personal gifts. Sun gives to individual students or programs about which he feels strongly. His most recent gift supported Chinese graduate students studying in U.S. universities. Additionally, he gave to a college student internship program operated by a Chinese American nonprofit organization. When asked about his loyalty to his alma mater, Sun said:

I don't feel any loyalty to Cyan University. You know, they didn't help me out. I have given as a part of the alumni fund; that aside, I have no commitment to Cyan. I loved being there, it's a good school, but if I am going to give, I want to give where it means something personally to me. I suppose that I can give to Cyan University, designating for Chinese Americans, but I can do that on my own, and that's what I am doing. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

### **Influence by School's Philanthropic Philosophy**

Chinese American donors emphasized the influence of school's philanthropic philosophy. While in college, donors encountered ideas about philanthropy, the important concepts of giving and helping others. Notable cases include Guo and Liu. Both graduated from a women's college with national reputations of successful alumni relationships. According to Guo, there is a famous saying that goes, "Over the years, Crimson College comes in and doesn't go away" (Personal Communication, June 10, 2010). The college employed multiple strategies to encourage a culture of giving. During college, students benefit from a wide variety of financial aids. Liu said:

When at Crimson College, I did. Crimson has a very good financial package. Well over 50% of their students are on financial aid, one way or another. Crimson has a need-blind policy. So, if you're good enough to get into Crimson, you're guaranteed the financial aid you need to get you through four years which I think is a luxury that many schools have given up. Crimson College is very committed to that. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

Additionally, the college encouraged volunteerism. During and even after college, students engaged actively in volunteer activities. When asked how the college taught their philosophy of giving, Liu said:

It was the culture. Almost 90% of the Crimson College students do volunteer work; they help tutor the community. There is a very high volunteerism rate at Crimson. It's just a natural part of the life to give back and to help others. When Crimson female graduates go into communities, there are very few women who are not really core members of the community services fabric. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

The development of individuals' appreciation of the school's philanthropic philosophy during college through financial aid and volunteer activities enabled donors' desires to give back. Growing up, Liu's parents had always been generous but frugal because of their economic background. Her father was a middle class businessman, and his income was just enough to support the family—that is, the parents and four daughters. While her family went to church every Sunday and supported religious activities, the amount of family giving outside church remained minimal. Her family shared a value of philanthropy but did not have means to support others. It was her college experience that re-formed Liu's philanthropic behaviors. When asked about her motivations to give, Liu said:

My mother has always been generous when she could be, but in those days we just didn't have the resources... She [mother] has always had a big heart just like my father. I think the lack of philanthropy growing up was really mean-based, just not having resources then. When I went to Crimson College, I already had that sense that if you can afford it you should give. The motto at Crimson is to serve rather than to be served. So, it was always to serve and to give back. This model was something I truly agreed with. It was consistent with my upbringing, consistent with the way I dealt with people in life. I would always rather give than take, and that's something I knew even before Crimson, but Crimson's model agreed with me completely. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

## **Remembered Student-Mentor Relationships**

Relationships with former advisors and mentors enhanced Chinese American giving. During college, Chinese American donors developed close relationships with their mentors, and the relationships remained even after graduation. A case in point is Cai. To him, “Close relationships, admiration, appreciation” between himself and his mentor were the most important motivators for giving to U.S. higher education (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010). Originally emigrated from Taiwan, he earned his Master’s, Doctorate, and Post-Doctorate degrees in the U.S. Throughout his graduate program, Cai’s mentor taught him the knowledge, skills, and strategies to prosper in mainstream America. Cai’s relationship with his mentor remained very personal and long-lasting. In many ways, Cai’s successful career trajectory owed largely to his mentor’s effective guidance, one in which his teacher showed him the right path. When his mentor was diagnosed with a critical illness, he supported and raised funds for a Ph.D. scholarship program at his alma mater. He said:

My thesis professor, he was very kind to me, helped me find a job, really pushed me to go higher. I was the industrial recruiter for Magenta Company, so every year I went back to Olive University, I’d take him out for dinner, he and his wife; we had a very close relationship. Then he developed a brain tumor in 2007... At that time I started calling his Ph.D. students, about 150, and I set up a memorial scholarship for him. We raised about, I would say close to, \$100,000, and he himself sold a condominium he owned... and that was like \$400,000, so together there was a half million dollar scholarship in his name. Every year Olive University generated give four scholarships, Ph.D. scholarship. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

When asked about the most memorable experience of giving, Cai discussed the campus-wide memorial ceremony to honor his mentor. The university invited about 300 to 400

guests, including the vice president and the Dean of Science. During the event, Cai made a keynote speech on behalf of his fellow advisees. He recalled:

I was a little nerve-wrecking because I was in front of 300, all high caliber people. It took me a good three weeks to prepare the speech. I think I gave a good speech because an old Chairman rushed to me when I stepped out. He said, “When I die I want you to speak.” I guess I spoke from my heart, so people feel it was very appropriate. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

### **Met His or Her Partner During College**

In addition to student-mentor relationships, Chinese American donors gave because of memorable times spent together with their significant others. Interestingly, female donors were more inclined to consider dating experiences in college as one of their strong motivators. To Liu, her record-breaking gift of 25 million dollars for her alma mater traced back to her and her boyfriend’s campus life. When asked about her motivation behind the gift, she said:

That goes way back because my husband and I were dating back in the 60s. I ended up going down to Aqua University all the time because there was no place to hang out at Crimson College. So even those days, I kept saying, Crimson really needs to have a campus center. There’s no place for young people to go, no place to hang out, study together... That was something I always thought about if the day comes and it’s our position to help out, we really should do it. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

Her innate desire manifested over forty years later when the college launched a capital campaign. According to Liu and her husband, this was a perfect setting to make the dream come true. She continued:

When Crimson College announced the big Capital Campaign... on the list of things we wanted to have support for in the capital campaign was the Campus Center. I looked at it and I said, “If we were to do anything for the capital campaign, this is really where we would like to give because it was obviously the most expensive item on the list, but it was something that could truly resonate.”

My husband and I talked about it, and we said we would love for Crimson to have it. They truly need it, and it was something that would really resonate with us personally. Because we were there as young people and we knew, by then, we said it wasn't just for the need for young people but the need for all. That's why we call it a Campus Center. It is not a student center because it serves the needs of faculty, administration, the extended family of the students. It really is a living hub of the campus. We spoke to college president and said this is something that we would like to help with. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

Overall, charitable giving revealed donors' gratitude for education, resources, people, and relationships acquired throughout college. During college, Chinese American donors shared positive experiences. They embraced and benefited from resources, people, and opportunities available in university settings. Donors agreed that college education secured fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to excel in their respective professions. Scholarship recipients appreciated financial support they received during college. Several donors gave to honor their mentors, demonstrating their appreciation for lasting guidance and mentorship. Additionally, memorable time with significant others in college increased donors' philanthropic intentions. All in all, donors explained the motivations of their charitable gifts as pertaining to their college experiences. Different material and humanistic resources acquired during college cultivated and strengthened donors' philanthropic behavior to give back.

### **Institutional Attachment to Alma Mater**

Alumni involvement with an alma mater strengthened philanthropic motivations. Donors actively engaged in alumni functions, serving leadership roles in boards of regents, alumni associations, university foundations, boards of trustees, and advisory boards. Aside from "mandatory" board membership fees, financial support and services

required of board members, donors gave exclusively to institutions with which they affiliated.

More likely, Chinese American alumni volunteered in alumni functions before making monetary contributions. University presidents, deans, development officers, and/or donors' close friends approached trustee candidates by "word-of-mouth." Liu is a Trustee Emeritus at a women's college and also a board member of two other universities. When asked about how she became a board member at a non-alma mater, she said:

People know who are the good trustees, who are the ones who can really make a difference, who are not only generous with their financial resources but also with their time, wisdom, and connections. Orchid University pursued me a couple of times. Again, I said no because I was busy. I think after the second or third time, a very good friend who is currently chair of the Orchid University, who was also on the Crimson College Board and Metropolitan Board with me, just said, "Liu, we really, really need you. You can make such a great difference." So, often you're wooed by the institution when they know who they really want on their wish list for Trustees. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

Unsurprisingly, by far the most influential strategy was personal interaction with the president. Fang is a graduate of a state university in the Midwest. He currently serves on the advisory board of the business school at the university and also founded a local chapter of the Chinese American Alumni Association. In his case, the president, accompanied by the vice president, traveled to meet Fang and seek his support. In order to accomplish the stipulations of a record-breaking 40 million dollar gift by another individual, the school was under enormous pressure to secure 20 to 30 internship positions in Asian countries. Knowing Fang's connections in Asia, the university approached Fang. This year, he was asked to develop 50 internship positions across Asia. In the capacity of a school advisor, Fang was invited several times to speak about the corporate world in Asia.

Chu has recently completed his final term of presidency at the engineering school alumni association. His annual contribution to the school fluctuates depending on the stock market, ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 every year. He gives another \$1,000 to the Business School where he helped launch a community service program. The program targets freshman business school students and offers integrated professional training in real-world settings. Over the course of this program, students are paired up with an alumni advisor. Ever since the program launched in 2006, Chu served in mentor and spokesperson roles. Concurrently, he received the Alumni Medal and Alumni Mentor of the Year awards. When asked how he felt about these awards, Chu said, "I enjoyed it. I am not in it for the award, but it was nice to be recognized" (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

To Ma, professional responsibilities furthered alumni attachment. At his alma mater, he became an active member of the university foundation and advisory board. As a top senior officer in one of the world's largest companies, he gives individual gifts and oversees corporate giving. During the interview, he recalled his initial incentive to serve on the advisory board. He said:

So, they had records of me giving over a sustained period of time... So somehow, they tracked me from whatever records, they came up and visited me and said, "Hey, we see that you donate money to the university. You have never been involved with us. Would you like to be on the Advisory Board of the College of Business, and therefore you get to help shape what the business program is about?" So I thought, "Hey, that's really neat. I get to go back and help shape some of that stuff." So they asked me to join, so I joined the Advisory Board. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

The majority of Ma's responsibilities on the board include the supervision and operation of corporate giving. More recently, he helped implement 20 merit-based scholarships to

freshman students in the business school. When asked about how this gift developed, he said:

But, when I was on the Thistle University board, I worked for Azure Company, and the new business dean came along one time and talked about some of the programs that they wanted to do. One of those programs was one in which we could give four-year scholarships to students not based on needs but based on merit... What we like to do is see if we can find people or corporations help us fund that. I was with Azure Company, so I said I think we can do that. So, I'm sitting at this board, and the Dean was talking at one of these meetings, and I said, "I think we can help you with that." So in sixty days, we got it done. We basically contributed close to half a million dollars for scholarships. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

Unsurprisingly, critical failures to cultivate students' attachment to schools decreased donors' philanthropic contributions. A case in point is Chu, a native of New York Chinatown. He was born and raised in the area, receiving his undergraduate and graduate degrees from a local private university. After graduation, he procured a senior analyst position at one of the nation's top companies in Manhattan. Although he spent his entire life in the area, in close proximity to his alma mater, it took him 25 years to reconnect with the university. When asked about why he did not have any contact with his alma mater, he said:

After I graduated, Teal University had no program, no effort to reach out to its alumni. As an urban university they didn't have much of a campus life. So after I graduated, I don't think I stepped foot on Teal campus for about maybe 20 years. They never reached out to me. I don't remember even getting a letter asking for money. It's just like they lost contact with you. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

He describes himself and his fellow classmates as a "lost generation." Because the university failed to nurture relationships with alumni, there exists a generation who has little to no attachment. He continued:

So in that sense, a lot of people would say, “What should I give? I don’t feel anything.” That’s how Teal University was in old days, and when they don’t solicit you for 25 years, like in my case, why would you give? I’m living in NY; no one bothered me, they didn’t invite me to anything. They must have had some events somewhere along the way that I could have gone to, but no one told me. They didn’t care. There’s a lost generation because of that. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

It was roughly two decades later that the university finally approached Chu. An Asian development officer from the university contacted him and invited him to serve as one of the founders of an Asian alumni club. This was the turning point for his voluntary engagement with the university. Since then, he has been appointed on the boards of several schools and has been nominated as a founding member of the university’s alumni association. As he became more involved on site, the university started making monetary requests. In his interview, Chu recalled his first solicitation process. He said:

Initially, they were asking me for, like, give me \$2,000 a year, and I said, “I can’t give you \$2,000 a year; it’s, like, beyond me right?” And you know, because we are always thinking like \$100 or \$200 at that time if you are lucky... But then later on, I was giving like \$10,000 a year. So I think whatever they did the strategy kind of worked because they got you more involved and connected. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

To Chu, nurturing philanthropic behavior required time. Right after graduation, Chu had minimal impulses to give back because of missing connections. It was not until he became more engaged in alumni functions and expanded his roles in university boards that he felt comfortable contributing his own wealth. Currently, he supports the business and engineering schools, having graduated from both, and serves in leadership roles on advisory boards.

Additionally, alumni’s loyalty diminished when their family members received a rejection letter from the university. A case in point is Rong, a retired doctor and

philanthropist. He has served on over 40 different voluntary organizations and given generously to causes mostly in his local Chinatown community. Additionally, he is a generous supporter of American higher education; recipients of his gifts include two local institutions from which he graduated. One of these is a public institution. His eldest son, now a senior officer in one of the world's largest companies, also graduated from this institution. His gratitude for his and his son's education drove Rong to pledge extensive support to the institution. In fact, the university recognized him with special honorable status given to the most influential alumni. Nevertheless, his attachment to the university vanished completely when his grandson was rejected by the institution. He said:

But, if you ask my wife, she's turned off by Olive University because I went there, my son went there, and when my number one grandson applied, you could not list whether your father, your grandfather was alumnus. You cannot list that. You cannot list how much you have given to the university. His number one was to go to Olive... Olive University did not take him. (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010)

In Rong's view, the university ignored an important opportunity to reconnect with promising alumni. He said:

The point I'm making, now you lost alumni with the ability to give, because to raise money, you have to have loyalty, a passion for something. People give because they have a passion. People give because they have loyalty for whatever reason. But if you don't build that up, so, if Olive University comes and asks me, do you want to give? My answer is no, no thank you. The reason they have done that is because they wanted more out-of-state students. So for a short-term gain, they are losing some long-term potential. (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010)

The majority of donors reconnected with their alma mater through university boards.

Alumni's emotional attachment increased as they became closer to students, faculty, and the university leadership. In many cases, monetary contributions succeeded donors'

voluntary supports. Normally, the president, deans, development officers, and sometimes their close friends approached donors to serve on university boards. During the course of board memberships, donors made monetary contributions to satisfy board requirements. Additionally, they helped facilitate academic programs and provided mentorship to students. In response to lifetime contributions, several donors even received awards and medals. Board memberships created essential channels to reconnect and give back to the university. In contrast, a lack of alumni attachment discouraged prospects to give. Several donors' resentment to giving reflected university failure to reconnect and sustain trustworthy alumni relationships.

### **Individual Affinity to Chinese and Chinese American Communities**

In addition to alumni attachments, Chinese American giving reflected donors' emotional attachment to the Chinese and Asian American communities. Despite different degrees of self-affiliation, donors interviewed for this study identified themselves as Chinese American. Donors considered themselves as American but with strong influences from their Chinese heritage. Either from their family upbringing, education, or volunteer activities, donors consistently was aware of their Chinese heritage. They celebrated the richness of Chinese culture, hoping to share its value with other members of American society. As Americans of Chinese descent, donors espoused differing desires to give for the benefit of Chinese and Asian American communities. This sense of communal attachment appeared in multiple aspects of Chinese American giving, including donors' motivations to advance the community, to teach Chinese heritage to

fellow American citizens, to improve U.S.-China relationships, to demonstrate philanthropic leadership, and to celebrate Chinese American university leadership.

### **Advancing Chinese and Asian American Communities**

Chinese American donors gave to advance Chinese communities in the United States. Some gifts solely targeted sub-set Chinese American communities, reflecting donors' motivation to help Chinese people because of Chinese ethnicity. In the case of Sun, his discovery of Chinese American identity initiated his gift for Chinese students studying in American higher education. As mentioned above, Sun was born in the 1930s and experienced intense segregation against minorities in his neighborhood. Growing up, Sun did not have any firsthand experiences of Chinese tradition. In fact, he and his brothers revoked their Chinese heritage. He said:

Unfortunately, my father passed away when I was eight years old. My mother had to raise five of us. Essentially, I didn't grow up with any Chinese culture. I observed a little bit of what others in the Chinese community did, but I didn't experience it firsthand. My two brothers and I pretty much rebelled and quit speaking Chinese as a matter of fact. Just decided it didn't pay to be a Chinese person in Mississippi at that time, so we tried to blend in as much as we could. In our so-called wisdom at that time we wouldn't speak Chinese at that time. Consequently, not only I did not experience the culture, I sort of lost it. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

The turning point came when he reached his retirement age. After separation with his wife, he started revisiting his identity. Right around the same time, he decided to volunteer as an English teacher at a middle school in an impoverished area of China. This was his first trip to China. He recalled, "My first trip to China ever because, like I said, I had ever had any idea that I will ever go back to China because I felt like I wasn't

Chinese. But this trip, it was a great experience, and it really taught me that hey Sun, you are Chinese” (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010).

After he came back to the U.S., he filed his retirement paperwork and spent two years in China teaching English at the university level. Today, he gives individual gifts to his former Chinese students studying in U.S. universities. Additionally, he serves on the boards of Chinese American-related nonprofit organization and supports internship programs for Asian American college students anonymously. When asked about his motivation to support Asian and American students, he said, “I just try to find people in the Chinese American and Asian American community who are pursuing their education when they need some help. That’s what I have been doing” (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010). He continued:

I just basically help young people. Since I had that great experience with university students in China, I can relate to them and feel like I can help them with the program in the APA nonprofit that I support, the internship program that specifically targets college students to help them grow much stronger and really to enlighten them about the experiences of being Asian American. To me, that is a very good target. Young people unlike me, who have an interest in helping the community, unlike me when I was at their age, they realize I have connections with Chinese and wanted to help. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

To Ma, his gifts benefit the larger Asian American community. Now that both of his parents have passed away, Ma considers the Asian American community as his family. Giving for the benefit of the Asian American community, from his perspective, is a Chinese tradition of supporting “family” (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010). He currently serves on boards of universities and Asian American nonprofit organizations, supporting and operating scholarships for Asian American college students. In response to the question of how Chinese heritage influenced his charitable decisions, he said:

One of the things that is very important in Chinese culture is family. I actually think because I'm here in the U.S., that my extended family is actually fairly large. So, that family to me is a broader Asian American community in the U.S. that is still underrepresented but not as successful as we would like to see. As a result, because I'm successful, I've been one of the few to make it through all these things, then it's sort of my obligation to basically reach back and help some of the people who are not as well-off. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

### **Improving US-China Relations**

Chinese American donors gave to strengthen bilateral U.S.-China relationships. Many donors interviewed for this study head companies that operate across U.S. and Asia. Other donors spent time in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong either as adolescents or as volunteers. Within their professional and personal capacities, donors interacted with people and became increasingly aware of needs to develop their home country/regions. They believed that building a stronger China would improve U.S.-China relationships and ultimately advance the status of Chinese Americans in the U.S.

This is a reason why donors fund scholarly exchange programs targeting Chinese academic and business leaders. A case in point is Lu, a long-time generous supporter of her alma mater. In addition to her gifts to campus infrastructure, she and her family supported scholarly exchange programs, including visiting scholarships for Chinese journalists and science Ph.D. scholarships for Chinese graduate students. When asked about her motivation to support Chinese American causes specifically, she referenced Chinese history around the late 1990s. She said:

In 1997, they were starting to send more students from China to the United States, but a lot of them were going back. So, we were trying to figure out, well what we can do to help China, but that means whoever we educate has to have a chance of going back. There's nothing we can do to stop that. So that's why we targeted young professors who were five ten years into their careers, had labs, had students who were judged to be rising stars to come and enhance their experiences at the

Olive University. And then they would go back and utilize not only what they've learned but also now they have sort of connections and networks, to go back and that would propel them. And we were hoping that that would really propel China. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

An entrepreneur and a philanthropist, Liu's philanthropic activities strive to advance U.S. and China relationships. In addition to her contributions to Asian American nonprofit organizations, Liu funded a visiting Chinese scholar program at the business school, which brought Chinese senior academic and/or business leaders to the U.S. When asked about her motivations, she said:

Obviously my work with [APA nonprofit] was really to foster better relationships between the U.S. and Asia. My work with Teal University gave me access to great scholarly resources. If I set up this scholarship at Teal, I can help bring over very bright individuals and further their career and expose them to all the resources I had at Teal and [APA nonprofit]. At the same time, I wanted to make sure that the fellowship was another building block on that bridge between the U.S. and Asia. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

### **Teaching Chinese Culture and History to Fellow Americans**

Additionally, Chinese Americans gave to advocate Chinese heritage to fellow Americans. An entrepreneur and third-generation philanthropist, Ong gave to higher education for increased awareness of Chinese culture and heritage. He said, "I want to share the heritage and what China has to offer with my adopted country" (Personal Communication, June 17, 2010). Ong's giving to U.S. higher education focused primarily on two areas: Chinese culture and education. When asked why these two areas, he said:

Education because that's a very strong commitment, and Chinese culture because when I first came here as a child, I was a lone Chinese in a sea of Caucasians. There were few Asians. Unlike now, there were very few Asians. Contemporary China, at that point, had nothing to be proud of. In 1949, it was basically almost a

failed society... China was stuck in backwardness. But Chinese history and culture was something that I could look to, to find some pride in my roots. So this is really the reason that I support people learning Chinese, learning about Chinese culture, history, etc. (Personal Communication, June 17, 2010)

Because Chinese Americans focus their efforts on Americans, they gave to universities and colleges in the U.S. As people of Chinese descent living in the U.S., giving to Chinese causes was a legitimate way to acknowledge American affinity and to share Chinese culture with fellow Americans. Within the American context, donors strongly promoted, celebrated, and shared the richness of Chinese culture. Ong elaborates on this point:

My point of view is that I am an American with Chinese heritage. So, part of the motivation is that I want Americans who know so little about Asia to learn more about Asia generally and China specifically. That impulse on my part probably started with a personal need to share something that I could be proud of with my fellow Americans. Now, it's really driven by, I think, the sense that this country needs very much to know more, for its own good, a lot more about Asia. (Personal Communication, June 17, 2010)

### **Celebrating Asian American University Leadership**

Chinese Americans gave to recognize Asian American leadership in U.S. universities and colleges. In the late 1990's, a public university attracted enormous amounts of Chinese American donations after the university hired a high ranking Chinese American official. Chinese Americans contributed their wealth to the university to celebrate the official's accomplishment and to support his future endeavors. University alumna Lu is one of them. Lu's family relationship with the official emerged on the first day of the official's appointment; the day that her family left a million dollar gift on his desk. She said:

The day that [Chinese American leader] took office, there was a million dollar check on his desk from us. And, it was to do with however he pleased. Our message was, you know, congratulations for being the first of many. We wanted to support you, so we are going to give this money to do it. You can spend it the way you need to spend it. And, so of course we got to know him. I got to know him really well and I miss him because he was really a great man. He did a lot not only for Olive University but for Chinese Americans. I think that may have been the best gift that we have ever made because it really led the way for Chinese American leadership in the universities. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

The family allocated the gift to the “[Leader]’s Opportunity Fund.” This was an unrestricted gift, and the official directed funds until his resignation. After the official left the university, Lu’s family managed the gift restrictively for the benefit of Chinese visiting scholars and journalism programs. The family’s close relationship with the official brought another gift. When the official sought external funding to support the health center, Lu’s family contributed another million dollars.

Still, Chinese Americans continue to honor the official’s accomplishments. In 2008, Chinese American donations supported the renovation of the East Asian library. At the entrance of the library there stands a tall plaque of contributing donors, many of them who gave in memory of the official. Rong, an alumnus, stated:

Would another [leader] have been successful? No, because before and after, no one has given that amount of money. It was a success because he had a Chinese face? No, not exactly. It was success because people wanted to support him as the first Chinese [leader]. They wanted to show he could raise money better. (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010)

### **Demonstrating Philanthropic Leadership in Chinese American Communities**

Chinese American major donors gave to demonstrate philanthropic leadership within the Chinese American community. Donors interacted with recipients to empower

their philanthropic impetus, while they publicized their contributions to stimulate fellow Chinese Americans.

Lu's family is one of the most influential Chinese American donors to U.S. higher education. Until now, the family distributed millions of dollars to U.S. universities all across the nation. While the purpose of giving varied across different causes, one focus remained consistent: the importance of teaching philanthropic behaviors to the next generation. With regard to her million-dollar gift to a scholarship program for Chinese Ph.D. students, Lu said:

What we've done now is we try to have an annual dinner with these graduate students to get to know them a bit, and they also get to know us. The idea is that when they're in a position after they graduated, you want them to also contribute. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

To Ma, giving demonstrated philanthropic leadership within the Asian American community. As a successful corporate senior officer and vice president of an API nonprofit organization, Ma acknowledged his philanthropic roles. He said:

I can't save the world. I can't save everyone in poverty, and I can't feed the world. I can do a reasonable part to help other people in the Asian American community, make sure that as that as a role model, I give some guidance and do the things that I'm capable of doing. I am not going to be a protester and carry a sign and do that. What I can do is from within the limits of my position, providing those scholarship programs for military veterans or Asian Americans or things like that. Therefore I can be much more effective in doing that than other things. And so the Thistle University and [APA nonprofit] are better off because I'm in a senior position and backing them. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

Notably, a strong desire to promote philanthropy drove Liu and her husband to "come out of the closet" and announce their contributions for the first time to the public. Previously,

Liu and her husband remained anonymous about their major gifts. When they gave a mega-gift to Liu's alma mater, however, they decided to do so publicly. She said:

In Crimson College's case, they said, "this is such an incredible gift. It's record breaking. It will really put Crimson on the map. It would inspire other people to do so. We're working on other friends to do another generous thing. Can we possibly use your name?" (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

She continued:

In the past, we have given large gifts but anonymously. Crimson College was really the first instance in which we came out of the closet, and this was because the institution asked us to. We felt that it could serve a purpose. We never asked to have publicity because frankly, my husband and I don't care about the fanfare and the credits. It's really doing the right thing for the institution. But when the institution asked if they could use our name to inspire other people to give, then we allowed our names to be used. Many times we will give anonymously, but where there's something that is notable and the institution has asked, we will say yes. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

Beyond recipients and Asian American communities, Chinese American donors showcased Chinese Americans giving to mainstream U.S. society. Donors believed that giving not only encourages Chinese Americans to give but also announces in public that Chinese Americans do give for the collective good. Liu said:

Though in recent years it's been changing as more and more Chinese have been willing to be public about their gifts. I think they realize that they are setting examples for other Chinese. If they give, then maybe other Chinese will be more generous and show the American community that Chinese Americans are also grateful to be in this country. I think there are many ways to set an example for your fellow Chinese, to tell your fellow Americans that Chinese Americans are grateful and give back to the community because we truly value education. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

Clearly, Chinese American donors gave to advance the status of Chinese Americans in the States. Their gifts strengthened U.S.-China relationships and furthered public awareness of Chinese history and culture. They also give to celebrate Chinese American

university leadership, as demonstrated in the case of first Chinese American leader at a public university. These Chinese American donors became philanthropic role models among students, Chinese American communities, and American society as a whole.

### **Personal Attachment to Charitable Gifts**

Chinese American giving revealed donors' individual attachments to their gifts; donors gave to causes that interest themselves and their family members and they retained personal involvements in gift operations.

### **Charitable Causes Resonate with Personal Interests and Values**

Chinese American gifts illuminated donors' passions and interests. Donors gave to causes that truly resonated with their personal philosophies. Han is an entrepreneur and a founder of a philanthropic foundation. His gifts to U.S. higher education are unique in that his major gifts target institutions beyond his or his family members' alma maters. Instead, he supports programs that align with his interests in the scientific approach to human happiness. His first major gift of \$400,000 benefited a graduate program in positive psychology. When asked about the development of his gift, he explained:

I met with the founder of the program, and I felt that this was a research area that needed special attention and support. It was basically like seed money because this was a new program... I would say that psychology in the past has generally been more concerned with treating mental illness, and hasn't really been concerned with optimizing human happiness. Human happiness doesn't mean just the absence of mental disease and illness but also means there are certain things that make life worth living and makes life joyful and meaningful. The chair of the program, we became friends, and he wrote some books that were very

influential to my thinking... I found that these are the areas that could be really helpful to a lot of people in terms of finding more meaning in their life and gave me meaning in my life; I found them effective in my own life so I wanted to support that program. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

Han's philanthropic activities emerged from his passion for scientific research on the quality of life. When further probed how he developed this particular interest, he said:

I think in college I was a philosophy and math major. Through my studies of philosophy, I really believe that you only know some things when you experience it firsthand. There's a lot of theoretical knowledge, but you don't know until you experience it. The scientific method is one that you actually experiment and verify. So, just looking at the big picture; science had a tremendous influence on our society. It's a primary way that ideas gain credibility and influence our own society through scientific supports... When the scientific research shows how they can reduce stress and make you happier, then that's an important contribution. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

While Han spontaneously approached the university, a majority of Chinese Americans gave when the university proposed a cause that spoke to their personal interests. For instance, Ma's passion in supporting veterans' programs comes from his background of serving in the military. He said:

They were interested and said, Ma, can you work with us because I know Azure Company hires a lot of veterans. What we would like to do is to develop something that provides career counseling for veteran officers in business school. Can you provide scholarships, or can you provide job fairs or something else? Now, I'm a military veteran also. I served six years in the [state] National Guard. So it's like wow, that's a neat idea! We love people in the military, or I love them because they serve the country and do wonderful things. So, if I can sort of work with Thistle University or any other school to develop programs to help them, that's what I'm interested in doing. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

Additionally, Chinese American giving demonstrated family interests. Originally from Taiwan, Pan is a president and CEO of a nation's leading software technology leasing company. While he earned his Ph.D. in engineering, his major gifts to universities

targeted scientific research and education. More recently, he donated 15 million dollars to a physics department for the establishment of a research institute. He explained that his philanthropic decision is largely influenced by his family's shared passion and engagement in science. He said:

Our family has a very deep root and interest in science in general. Both my sisters are sort of in biochemistry, my brother is a physicist at Orange University. So, growing up, I have been very interested in science as well. As you know, science is probably even less-funded than engineering. So even though my field is in engineering, when they wanted to start this research center, I was very happy to help them. (Personal Communication, July 3, 2010)

### **Personal Involvement and Accountability Regarding Gifts**

Another aspect of personal attachment is Chinese American donors' persistent involvement in philanthropic causes. In many cases, donors were present physically for many causes they supported. In Cai's words, "People who give money always wonder how the money is spent. If you know that's where the money goes, and you know the department first hand, you can appreciate where the money is, and you are surer how the money will be spent" (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010). To maintain physical involvements, donors developed personal ties with university leadership, development officers, or faculty members. In some cases, donors developed friendships in the process of giving.

Donors believed that giving to familiar causes minimized complexity and maximized accountability. Because donors believed in the cause, they had no second thoughts about how the money would be spent. Nor did they speculate regarding the impact of the gift. As mentioned above, Sun's giving pattern is unique in that he gives directly to his "friends" rather than to institutions. More specifically, he supports his

former Chinese students pursuing advanced degrees in the U.S., and also, he donates to the internship program through a Chinese American nonprofit organization with which he is affiliated. When asked whether personal attachment is a major factor in his giving, he said:

I feel like it is. It's either to help people I know or help those in the Asian American community who I think are going to help the community to have a better quality of life. I guess that's the principle that I work with. If I'm going to give, I want to be personally involved. To me, it is important to get some sense of self-satisfaction, and I don't think I'm getting any by giving open-ended gifts to universities and for their general use, my not really knowing who it goes to or for what purposes it goes to. I would rather do it on my own terms. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

Pan, a founder and CEO of an international software venture argued that giving to affiliated causes is the most efficient way to give; it saves tremendous amounts of time required for philanthropic activities. Because he continues to work long hours to expand his businesses, he has insufficient time for philanthropy. He said:

To give, you have to have time. I don't have a lot of time, so I haven't done much compared to other people. So to give these major gifts to these three places is because I know these people. I went to school at Orange, and my son went to Orange. But Peru and Olive both were my alma maters. So, I know all the people, I know what they do. I know they need help and things like that. So, it's a lot easier. If it's a different thing, different people, a different school, and then it will take time for me to get to know them. I just don't have that kind of time right now. (Personal communication, July 3, 2010)

Donors' desires to become personally involved directed their gifts to local institutions. After his first major gift, Han specified his second gift to a local public institution. His half million dollar gift funded research initiatives in the behavioral science program.

When asked about his motivation to give to this program, he said:

Well, I had a positive experience with the gift to Moccasin College, and I wanted to do something that was local to the Bay area... The faculty director of the

[program] was actually one of the protégés of the professor down at Olive University so I asked him to make the introduction; from there I met the faculty director here at Olive. We shared a common vision. The common vision was that there is a lot of academic research on concrete ways that people can incorporate more compassion and gratitude in their lives to improve the quality of their life... These are all things that I believe have a very high value and use a science-based approach to talk about very important fundamental questions to leading a happy life... I thought this was a very important contribution to the field, and that it will be meaningful for me to be involved with this organization. As it is local, I could have local input on how it's been implemented. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

Chinese American donors supported personal and local causes to maintain physical involvements with charitable causes. To Ma, CFO of an international corporation, a philanthropist, and a liaison of corporate giving, active involvement with the cause was one of the primary factors for supporting higher education. He said:

Now, serving on the Board of [APA nonprofit], or any other things like that, my nature is to be active because if I'm there just for show, and you don't want any input from me or you just want a check, then I don't really care. So I think it's something you got to get me engaged, and then it gets much more interesting. Otherwise, go get a check from somebody else. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

In some cases, donors' personal attachment to a cause aligned with their professional background. Kao graduated from an American private university with a Ph.D. in molecular biology. He is a founder and current CEO of a private firm and provides technological and licensing support for scientific research. As a successful scientist and entrepreneur, he shared his forms of contribution: providing his expertise for the advancement of scientific fields. He said, "If I was trained to be a scientist, I should think about what I should do using what I learned to do the best in that particular area to make the contribution" (Personal Communication, July 1, 2010).

According to Kao, doing best in his field is the way to contribute to the society. After he established his successful career, he started giving back particularly for the advancement of the field. Such gifts benefit recipients and society undoubtedly but also lead to personal development. Kao continued:

My feeling is that if you are trying to be a scientist, you want to make a difference in that particular area that you are good at so that you can make a difference. That's your contribution. So it adds a lot of value to the society and also to you. That's what I'm trying. I don't think I should spend a lot of time to think about nonprofits or other things to begin with. If you think about that then you can't focus on what you do or maybe you can say that you might not be focusing enough to do a good job in what you're doing, unless you want to change your focus. I thought the best contribution I can do is to do very best in my area so that I can make contributions, and then from there then I could use what I know and what I make to contribute. That's the way how I think. (Personal Communication, July 1, 2010)

### **Lacking Personal Attachment to Causes and Reduced Motivation**

A feeling of disengagement discouraged Chinese Americans' motivation to give. When Chinese Americans gave, they donated to institutions where they felt emotional and physical attachment. As evident from the discussion in the previous chapter, a majority of Chinese American giving occurred within their local, personal environments. Donors rarely gave to remote areas lacking an existing affinity. Long-distance giving by Chinese Americans, more often than not, solely benefited an alma mater.

Lu is one of the donors who ended her connection with a remote institution. Following her family's philanthropic connections, she joined the board of a private East Coast university. Five years after her appointment she decided to resign because she perceived herself as a "rubber stamp" (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010). She realized that she was not making much of a contribution. Between professional and

family commitments, she had little time to invest in philanthropic activities; travelling back and forth across the U.S. multiple times a year was inconvenient.

Chinese Americans expressed disappointment when recipient institutions disregarded their requests. Ma is a case in point. When his company launched an emerging scholar's program for business school students at his alma mater, Ma posed one condition: the university had to solicit additional funding from other local companies to expand the scope of the program. However, he said:

Two or three years into the program, we're telling them, remember, you're supposed to sign up other companies. They weren't doing that because the new dean came in, and the new dean didn't think that was that important. Also, that's when I figured out, in a scholarship that the company gives to universities, who gets all the money? Students get all the money. The College of Business or the university, other than some administrative fees, they don't get anything. So there's no endowed chair. They can't help research with professors. As a result, the new dean or the chancellor at the university was like, OK, it is a nice program but it wasn't that important to them because it didn't help further the university's cause. Once I realized that, I was very disappointed and discouraged because if they had told me they'd really rather have endowed chairs, endowed chair awarded scholarships, I would have structured the program that way. So that was one of my disappointments. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

Chinese American donors gave to causes that resonated with personal interests and expertise. This type of giving remained truly personal: giving to areas of personal or family interest and contributing to causes that related to personal expertise. Additionally, Chinese American giving developed through personal connections. Besides existing connections, donors established new personal ties with people affiliated to the recipient institution. After giving, Chinese Americans maintained their personal involvement. For them, monetary contribution was not the end of the story. It was the prologue of a forthcoming relationship with the recipient institution. Donors believed that personal

attachment increased accountability. In this way, board memberships allowed donors to provide personal input and to oversee gift operations. This was one of the reasons why Chinese American donations targeted local institutions. A shared belief was that giving to local institutions maximizes personal involvement and minimizes time commitments. Given their preferences for personal input, donors felt discouraged when the university disregarded their voices.

### **Traditional Beliefs in Higher Education**

Chinese American gifts to U.S. higher education embraced Chinese traditional values regarding education. Donors believed that higher education is central to individual socio-economic successes. Additionally, improving the quality of higher education furthers societal prosperity.

### **Emphasizing Values of Higher Education to Individuals**

Chinese American donors embraced Chinese beliefs in higher education. Donors believed that higher education is a fundamental path to overcome any forms of prejudice and to prosper in life. Particularly for people from low-income family backgrounds, higher education opens up doors of opportunities. Ma is one of the few who reached a top management position in one of the world's largest corporations. In his view, higher education is the "way out of the inner city, poverty, or anything else" (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010). When asked why he gives to higher education specifically, he said:

Because I think it's the way you get out. You overcome any prejudice that's there. It's a way for you to get into an environment where you can contribute more to society or earn a living, be a professional and basically earn something that sort of

provides for your family and other things. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

Similarly, Sun is a first generation college student native to the U.S. His parents emigrated from mainland China in the 1930s and owned a grocery store in the Midwest. Under intense segregation and resource scarcity, Sun was not able to attend public school until he was in fourth grade. Recalling his adolescent years, he said:

My personal background is that growing up, it took a lot for me to go to college. A lot of sacrifice on my parents' part, and even on my brother's part because my oldest brother didn't go to college. I understand that having funds out there that students might be able to qualify for might be a great help for the community, and I realize that there is a new population of Asian Americans, you know children of new immigrants who are maybe living the same sort of equivalent lives that I lived as a child who just need a chance. I was given that chance luckily and had a good life as a result of that. Because of my fortunate circumstances, I want to be able to maybe help others have that chance as well. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

Additionally, immigrant students further embraced this value of American higher education. Several interviewees for this study were student immigrants in the 1970s who came to the U.S. for advanced degrees. A case in point is Pan, a founder and CEO of an international software vendor. He earned his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from U.S. institutions. During the interview, he traced his success to graduate school experiences in the U.S. He said:

As immigrants, Chinese people like myself certainly have benefited tremendously from higher education in the U.S. Especially in these areas, whether it's biotech, science, computers, and other telecommunication so and so forth. They made me who I am. I am sure it's the same everywhere else in the world. Education and higher education is the best ticket out of poverty and to prosperity (Personal Communication, July 3, 2010)

For Kao, a former student immigrant from Hong Kong and a founder and current CEO of a private company, educational experiences in U.S. universities produced wealth and relationships. When asked why he gives to higher education specifically, he said, “From my own perspective, I created a lot of wealth from this country and from a lot of people because I was a direct beneficiary from the higher education in this country” (Personal Communication July 1, 2010).

Notably, the impact of higher education is not only personal but generational. Lu is a successful entrepreneur and a fourth-generation philanthropist. Over multiple generations, Lu’s family has generously supported American higher education, including the alma mater of her grandfather, her father, and herself. When asked why she donates to U.S. higher education, she said:

The reason why we got involved with higher education and it’s such a big priority for us is that if you go back to my father who was able to as, more or less a refugee from China, was accepted into Green University and then to Lime business school. He looks back and says how different my life would have been if I had not come to the university in the United States. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

Chinese American donors believed that higher education produces immeasurable opportunities. Particularly for students who came from low-income households and overseas, American higher education provided knowledge and skills necessary to shape a platform for their current successes. In the words of Liu, a daughter of Chinese immigrant parents, “Particularly for immigrant families, which are generally low-income, education is a way to catapult the children from penniless immigrants to billionaires. Education is a way to do it” (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010).

## **Emphasizing Values of Higher Education to Society**

In addition to personal benefits, donors believed that giving to higher education advances society as a whole. Originally emigrated from Hong Kong, Kao is a founder and CEO of a biotechnology company. He is a generous supporter of American higher education; his million-dollar gifts helped finance a library renovation, scholarship programs, and graduate seminars. When asked why he supported higher education specifically, Kao said:

Higher education probably is the one thing that makes the most value to the society. Suppose you give money to other organizations; it doesn't mean that they are not good, they are good. That's why this kind of equation value reflects your perception of values. To me, higher education, if you actually cultivate them well, students will quickly be the best value. (Personal Communication, July 1, 2010)

Donors believed that giving to higher education maximized impact to society. To Pan, a founder and CEO of a software technology company, giving to higher education produced profound changes in society. When asked why he gives to American higher education, he said:

I think because that's the one area that would have the highest impact. I also gave a gift to my other alma mater. There, of course, is my undergraduate, but also they really did a great job because my father-in-law, he's already passed away, but they really took care of him in a very dedicated way. They are the best well-known hospital there. So we wanted to recognize them and thank them for doing good work. As I said, those are all part of higher education because whether it's about health care or about science or engineering, these are the things that can make advanced work and have a very profound change. It's not a lot of dollars but can yield some significant impacts over time. (Personal Communication, July 3, 2010)

In summary, Chinese American giving reflected Chinese beliefs in education.

Particularly, donors believed that American higher education benefits individuals,

descendants, and society as a whole. For immigrants and descendants of low-income families, higher education was the most significant factor contributing to future success in mainstream U.S. society. Giving to U.S. higher education reflected donors' gratitude for educational opportunities in the U.S. and a shared responsibility on their part to facilitate equivalent opportunities for the next generation.

### **Filial Piety and Fraternal Responsibility**

Chinese tradition emphasizes the Confucian concepts of filial piety and fraternal responsibility. Four relationships: husband-wife, parents-children, elder-younger siblings, and friend-friend shaped unique patterns of Chinese American giving.

#### **Giving Through Husband-Wife Relationships**

Husband and wife relationships encouraged Chinese American husbands to support their wives' alma maters. For instance, Kao's million-dollar gift funded the renovation of a science library at his wife's alma mater. When asked about his motivation, he said:

My wife came from [Olive University]... they have a very outdated library. It has been going on for some time, and so nobody liked to go to the library. Talking about it for about two and a half years, we decided to give the gift. So now they have a completely new library. (Personal Communication, July 1, 2010)

Similarly, Ong's mega-gift to his late wife's alma mater financed the building of a teaching museum and art gallery. When asked about his motivation, he said:

Fuchsia College, after my wife passed away, approached me, and I wanted to do something in her memory. They were very anxious to build a teaching museum. So the museum there is named after my late wife. That's not part of Chinese

culture, specifically. It's just a teaching museum. (Personal Communication, June 17, 2010)

### **Giving Through Parent-Son Relationships**

Chinese American donors gave to support parent funds at their children's alma maters. Particularly, donors' motivation increased when their descendants enrolled in their alma mater. Chu and his son are both graduates of the engineering school at a private university. Even though Chu later received an MBA from the same institution and now works in finance, he gave more generously to the engineering school. In addition to financial support, Chu recently completed his presidency of the engineering school's alumni association. When asked about the reasons he supports the engineering school specifically, he acknowledged his "gratitude for my son" (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010).

### **Giving Through Elder-Younger Brother Relationship**

Chinese American giving develops via sibling relationships. Donors gave because they were approached by siblings who included professors, development officers, and board members of recipient universities. A case in point is Ong. His brother-in-law, a professor of Chinese History and art at a private university, solicited Ong's million-dollar gift. He said:

For Aqua University, it was a family connection. My brother-in-law really was the leading professor in Chinese Art History. Aqua was the leader in the U.S., and he trained many other professors throughout the country who became professors in that field. We created something called a [center]. (Personal Communication, June 17, 2010)

Similarly, elder-younger brother relationships influenced Pan. After being approached by his brother, a leading physicist, he donated 15 million dollars to support the physics program at a private university.

### **Giving Through Friend-Friend Relationships**

Established friendships further stimulated Chinese American giving. Several donors had close friends working in the university while others made friends in the process of solidifying gifts. To Lu, her close friendship with a development officer influenced her philanthropic decisions. She said:

At Olive University somebody that I knew very well got a job at development... and she happened to be a Chinese American who grew up in Hong Kong. She was the only high ranking Chinese American in the development office that I thought was very effective. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

So after her friend left a development position, Lu's philanthropic motivation fluctuated. She noted:

Again, it's a person, it's not an organization that you connect with... The person that we worked with at Olive University left and I'm still good friends with her. I don't really know the person who's taking her place in principle gifts at Olive, and I don't feel a close relationship there. I feel a close relationship with the president, and so we continue to work with them. So the development person at that level is really important. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

### **Minimal Influence of Chinese Heritage in Giving**

While the above discussion highlighted the influences of Chinese culture and values, it is important to note additional arguments. Indeed, two interviewees disregarded the influence of Chinese culture on their philanthropic behaviors. A case in point is Chu, a senior financial analyst based in the East Coast. He received his

undergraduate and graduate degrees from a local institution and has been a generous supporter financially and voluntarily. To him, the connection between Chinese culture and his philanthropic decision is minimal. In fact, when asked whether his Chinese heritage has affected philanthropic decisions, he said:

I don't think so. Not that I could feel. I think it was more just Teal University reaching out, making an effort to connect you back to the university, and then once you are involved in participating, and it was much more natural to be willing to give... I think after we started [Asian alumni association], there was a reason to help Asian causes and to sponsor Asian events in that sense maybe, but I don't think it was Chinese. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

A second generation philanthropist and a founder of philanthropic nonprofit, Han shared similar views. In response to a question about cultural influences, he said:

I'd say not directly. What my father did as a role model had more of an indirect impact. I think also my work in college doing public interest work had more impact. In college, I did have an idea that I eventually wanted to start up my own non-profit career eventually. It took me almost 20 years to get around to doing that. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

Donors' perceptions of the cultural influence on philanthropic behaviors remained inconclusive. Several donors interviewed for this study denied Chinese influences on their giving. For them, philanthropic motivations were derived from non-cultural factors. In contrast, other donors acknowledged the influence of Chinese culture and heritage. Inspired by a traditional belief in education, donors supported educational causes. American higher education brought immeasurable value to individuals, particularly for unprivileged low-income and immigrant students. As increasing numbers of people embraced higher educational opportunities, society prospered. In this way, gifts to higher education created tremendous benefits for the entire society.

Additionally, Chinese American giving reflected donors' practice of filial piety or fraternal responsibilities. Findings showed that Chinese American giving encompassed four relationships: husband and wife, father and son, elder and younger sibling, and friend and friend. Husband and wife relationships developed husbands' gifts to wives' alma maters while father and son relationships encouraged gifts for parent funds. Sibling relationships initiated gifts to support programs that affiliated with elder siblings. Furthermore, friendships generated additional Chinese American donations. Friends of interviewees working in university administration served key roles in soliciting individual gifts. Notably, family and friend connections generated mega-gifts, some exceeding 40 million dollars. All in all, the concept of filial piety, or a strong loyalty to one's family and friends, drove Chinese Americans to give large amounts of donations.

## **CHAPTER 6: DONOR REFLECTIONS ON PHILANTHROPY IN THE CHINESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY: PERSPECTIVES, INTERNATIONALIZATION, AND EFFECTIVE FUNDRAISING**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide information about Chinese American donors' perceptions of philanthropy in the Chinese American community. The chapter begins by reviewing donors' perceptions on proposed "small, private, and personal" patterns of Chinese American giving (Koehn & Yin, 2002). The following section highlights donors' views of internationalization in Chinese American philanthropy, exploring how donors perceive the impact of rapid expansion of Chinese international student enrollment in U.S. higher education on overall Chinese American philanthropy. The final section presents donors' opinions of effective fundraising strategies for U.S. universities to attract Chinese American prospects.

### **Donor Perceptions Regarding "Small, Private, and Personal" Chinese American Giving**

How do donors perceive philanthropy in the Chinese American community? Earlier studies have characterized Chinese American giving as "small, private, and personal" as opposed to "large, public, and professional" giving in the Western context (Koehn & Yin, 2002). What are donors' reactions to this statement? Do they perceive Chinese American giving in a different way? The analysis of interview data revealed unique characteristics of Chinese American giving.

## **Chinese American Donors and Large Gifts**

Donors demonstrated mixed opinions about “small” Chinese American giving. Comparably fewer numbers of donors—one out of fourteen donors interviewed—agreed with the consensus that Chinese Americans give modest amounts. Their argument was that only a few billionaires give to charity, and there exists a larger population of Chinese Americans who do not give. During the interview, Ma recalled his previous conversation with a member of the Asian American community. In his colleague’s eye, “Asians want to take care of Asians, but they want to do it privately in small amounts” (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010).

Sun shared a similar vision. In fact, he considered himself as one of the generous donors who gave smaller amounts. He previously supported alumni funds, provided an anonymous gift to the internship program at a Chinese American nonprofit organization, and gave thousand-dollar scholarships to his former Chinese students studying in the U.S. When asked why he considers himself a generous donor, he said:

The way I look at it is that I’ve done some small things and doesn’t compare with some of these very generous philanthropists who have done extraordinary things. I am glad they’re out there, but I think there needs to be people like others more in community who are like myself, who do small things. We can celebrate our own small victory, that’s what I think. It’s a small ripple in a big ocean, but it’s still a ripple and it helps the community. If there’re more of us then these ripple effects will get bigger. I still think that not all of us are capable of being donors of a large scale, so we ought to just do what we can do. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

Interestingly, the majority of Chinese Americans donors interviewed for this study raised counterarguments about the predominant image of “small” Chinese American giving. Donors noted that “small” Chinese American giving is an inevitable outcome of the early Chinese immigration history. For first-wave immigrants who came prior to 1965, giving

to charity was beyond their financial capability. These immigrants fled from poverty and political turmoil in mainland China with the belief that America offered opportunities to improve their lives. What they found, however, was the reality of intense segregation and hardships in the labor market. Most immigrants became members of the so-called “downtown Chinese,” working in grocery stores, laundry shops, and restaurants at improvised Chinatowns as in New York and San Francisco (Takaki, 1989, p.425). Even among those who secured white-collar jobs, their foreign backgrounds restricted opportunities to advance in their career trajectories. In these circumstances, early immigrants had limited financial capacities to support charitable causes.

Post-1965 immigrants exhibited bimodal distribution in the socioeconomic spectrum: 1) refugee groups of cohorts who escaped from political conflicts and instability in China, and 2) student immigrants who came to pursue advanced degrees in the U.S. The first group of immigrants includes refugees who fled from political repression in mainland China and escaped to the U.S. through Hong Kong or Taiwan. Like the pre-1965 immigrants, these refugee immigrants envisioned America as a land of opportunity, only to find the reality of poverty, unemployment, and dilapidated housing conditions. In the interview, Lu discussed her perception of philanthropy among post-1965 refugee immigrants. She said:

I think the majority of Chinese Americans are the first generation because there was a huge migration in the seventies and beyond. And many first generation Chinese Americans if they came really as refugees you know, they don't have the capacity to give. If you don't speak English well then your job opportunity is pretty limited... They don't have that sort of a feeling of obligation. All they can think of is putting enough food on the table. So they are not going to give just as anybody in that financial or economic class is not going to give. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

In contrast, post-1965 student immigrants formed a so called “uptown Chinese” class (Takaki, 1989, p.425). Mostly from Hong Kong and Taiwan, these immigrants moved to the U.S. to pursue advanced college degrees. After graduation, they worked in white-collar jobs as managers, engineers, and entrepreneurs. Pushed by economic and educational excellence, several of these immigrants became generous philanthropists. Lu continued:

Many of the immigrants in the seventies came to go to university. I think those are the ones who have the economic capacity to give. But many of them are, if you go back to sort of my great-grandfather’s outlook, he sort of give back to his own community. He doesn’t give outside his community. So I think you find that they would give to their own local Chinese causes. Then some of them have sort of spread out into the larger communities. Those are the ones who take more of a world view I think. But there is nothing cultural about not giving. It’s just economics. I don’t think you should look at Chinese or Chinese Americans as having a cultural difference in terms of their views to philanthropy. I think you should look at all people as where they are on the economic ladder. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

Donors perceived that Chinese American giving parallels its socioeconomic basis in the host country. Compared to the first-wave and post-1965 refugee immigrants, post-1965 student immigrants were relatively well-off. With sufficient financial backgrounds, these immigrants could become influential philanthropists. In other words, first-wave and post-1965 refugee immigrants, if any, practiced “small” patterns of giving because of economic incapability. The consensus is not that Chinese Americans give small amounts, but rather, only selected groups of people had enough capacity to give major gifts.

One donor noted a connection between donors’ place of origin and their philanthropic contributions. According to Kao, those who are originally from Hong Kong are more likely to give, followed by immigrants of Taiwanese descent. Due to

their economic background, immigrants who came from mainland China are least likely to give. He said:

I think because of the economic status, the Hong Kong people in general give more per capita than the mainland Chinese. Probably the second will be the people from Taiwan and the third will be Chinese from mainland China. So, that is understandable because of the economic status. The economic wellbeing determines the amount as well as also the frequency. Not only the amount is high but also more per capita give, too. Chinese from mainland, except for few who make fortunes, in general, do not have the tradition to give. They have never experienced this kind of thing, to give. I'm not that rich either. I am here. I just make my living. You even have a decent life. Why should I give it to society? (Personal Communication, July 1, 2010)

According to Ma, another factor related to “small” Chinese American giving is the missing role model in Chinese American philanthropy. American society produced philanthropic icons, including historical figures like Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller and more recently Bill Gates and Warren Buffett. Chinese American communities on the other hand, lack visible philanthropic leadership. An absence of notable Chinese American philanthropic leaders contributes to a prevailing assumption that Chinese Americans do not give.

A majority of donors interviewed for this study claimed that Chinese Americans give large gifts particularly when they perceived particular needs. A case in point is the Sichuan earthquake back in 2008. The record showed that a total of 11 billion USD were raised for the earthquake relief (Give2Asia, 2009). When asked whether he perceived Chinese American giving as small, private, and personal, Rong immediately shook his head and said:

Chinese Americans have money, let me start with that. You see with the earthquake how much money they raised. This one woman wrote a 13 million check to her alma mater, one check. They have money, and they respect

education. They're grateful for the education. So, to their alma mater, they are exceptionally generous, I think. (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010)

Rong continued that Chinese Americans have potential to give even larger gifts if universities demonstrated causes that speak to donor's backgrounds. He said:

You should think, "Do Asians give?" Yes. Could they give potentially a lot more than they have today? The answer is yes. Who they give to depends on their educational background, the family background, and what experiences they have, you know. But if nurtured, you could maximize that. (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010)

Similarly, Chu mentioned the importance of institutional strategies to maximize the level of Chinese American contributions. He said:

I think we're a very affluent group. We have a lot of untapped potential if they can hook in somehow. They can reach significant numbers of people who I think you get a critical number participating. Everyone else will not jump on the wagon, but they will be more amendable to. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

### **Increasing Publicity Among Chinese American Donors**

Another existing assumption concerns "private" forms of Chinese American giving. Earlier studies posit that Chinese American donors prefer privacy and to remain anonymous about their charitable contributions. Three donors interviewed for this study shared this view. In Guo's eye, Chinese American donors preferred anonymity because of Communist influences; people are willing to give but at the same time they are afraid of consequences after they announce their philanthropic contributions publicly. One donor cited the case of Lei Zhan, a Yale graduate who donated close to nine million dollars to the School of Management. This record-breaking-gift to his alma mater turned into a nationwide debate with Chinese media harshly berating him for supporting the U.S.

university instead of Chinese schools. Pan perceived that there probably exists a preconception that privacy guarantees security. He said:

I think a lot of donors, may be not just Chinese Americans, they just don't feel like that's something you need to be, too exposed. Probably it's also because they don't like to get too much attention. A lot of the time it's for privacy reasons, and security reasons even, or they just don't want to be bombarded with additional solicitation. So that's that. (Personal Communication, July 3, 2010)

Nevertheless, Pan admits complete anonymity in the U.S. society is unattainable. He said, "In this society, even if you keep very quiet, they will still find you all the time a lot of the time. Anybody in the fundraising business, they know who to look for and where to find you. I don't think it's easy to hide" (Personal Communication, July, 2010).

As a matter of fact, more donors observed increasing publicity among Chinese American philanthropists. As mentioned earlier in the previous chapter, Liu "came out of the closet" with a \$25 million dollar gift to her alma mater. She believes that publicity exhibits philanthropic leadership and inspires others in the community to give by any means possible. Additionally, a majority of gifts to U.S. higher education by Chinese Americans were named after donors or their family's heritage. According to Cai, acknowledgement from recipient institutions legitimizes his gifts. When asked whether Chinese American giving is private, he said:

I don't know if it's really that private. At least people in my level, basically take fixed income monthly stipend, and came to this county, work all your life. I personally feel that universities, when they acknowledge me in their bimonthly magazine I feel that's right. I feel justified. I'd like to see that acknowledgement. I don't necessarily feel that I have to hide it. In a way I want to feel that people who give would like to be known. But I know people, in fact few people that I know give a lot, they're very rich, they actually want to be not known. I don't know the mentality, maybe it's to avoid other trouble or safety or other things, but I thought in general charitable giving should be acknowledged. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

## **A Combination of Personal and Professional Giving**

Many donors interviewed for this study argued that Chinese American giving remains personal: philanthropic giving developed within family and friend networks. According to Sun, this exhibits the self-protective characteristics of middle and lower class Chinese American communities. He said:

What I have learned about Chinese culture is that it can be selfish to some extent, that a lot of families feel like they need to help themselves, and after they help themselves why should they help someone else. I think the general culture for the common more middle-class and lower Chinese American community; I think the culture is very self-protective. I need to protect myself and just take care of my family and that's going to be it. That was frankly what I started with. I was never encouraged to help out others in the community. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

Chinese Americans embrace a strong desire to protect accumulated wealth within the family unit. A case in point is Cai's wife. Cai is a retired scientist and a philanthropist. He has given to a wide range of causes at universities, government, and cultural institutions in the U.S. and Taiwan. When asked about his family's reaction to his notable contributions, he talked about his wife's objection. He said:

My wife, she also came from Taiwan. She didn't think I should give that much money. She said, "Look, I'm a typical housewife, I am trying to cut corners, save this, save that, you easily give a thousand dollars to somebody we don't ever met." So that I think is a challenge. In fact, when I do most of the giving, I don't even mention my wife. I know some of my friends have somewhat similar problems. Your wife or spouse does not necessary see equally of to whom you give and how much you give. That I think maybe is a big barrier to a lot of Asian American giving. I think most of them I talk to, "Gee, if my wife knows I gave that much, she would kill me," something like that. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

According to Fang, there exists a distinct priority even within the family spectrum. Giving developed primarily through a father-son relationship. Father-daughter

relationships were considered secondary because daughters will marry “others.” Fang said:

I feel Chinese are more willing to give to family because of the ways they are educated. Fathers give to sons, sons give to the grandsons. It’s always been like that. They don’t even want to give to their daughters. They feel daughters are others! You understand? That’s the education. That’s the system there. They want to keep family wealth within the family. (Personal Communication, May 11, 2010)

Beyond family ties, donors perceived Chinese American giving as expanded to friend relationships. Charitable obligations develop when friends ask someone for help and vice versa. Looking back on his father’s charitable giving, Han said:

From my experience, it’s not particularly encouraged but it’s not discouraged either. I think there’s a strong emphasis on family and supporting the family first. I think through my father’s fundraising, charitable giving is mainly asking your friends to give. So, it’s mainly as a favor to your friends, to preserve friendships or relationships even if you don’t believe in the cause necessarily. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

Other donors additionally discussed critical factors behind this predominant belief in “personal” Chinese American giving. According to Ma, this relates to underdeveloped philanthropy in China. He said, “I think I heard that when you have big floods or anything else, the whole charitable giving is not as developed as it is in the U.S.” (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010). In fact, many donors noted a fragmented professional philanthropy in mainland China. Chinese people do give to philanthropic causes, but more structured patterns of philanthropy, such as tax policies, nonprofit sectors, and fundraising strategies, remain fragile. As a result, people do not have the mechanisms to give outside of their family networks. When asked if there are any factors that discourage philanthropy in the Chinese American community, Chu said:

It wasn't just part of the culture. I think with the earthquake that just happened in Sichuan, there was a spontaneous desire to give, so I think the impulse is there. There just isn't an organized group. They don't have a Chinese Red Cross, you know. They probably do but in the old days they didn't. Not that I was aware of or that was active in trying to collect funds and was visible. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

Still, donors stated that philanthropic giving among Chinese Americans professionalized in the past several generations. A case in point is Ong, a third generation philanthropist. He described his family philanthropy as the "Americanization of my family" (Personal Communication, June 17, 2010). Within three generations, his family philanthropy transformed from "personal philanthropy" to what he called "institutional philanthropy." His grandfather, a first generation immigrant from mainland China practiced "personal philanthropy," supporting individual causes in his own local Chinese community. It was his father who integrated personal and institutional forms of philanthropy. In response to a question about personal Chinese American philanthropy, Ong said:

My father did both. In other words, he started with what I call personal philanthropy where he would actually fund the schooling for particular individuals that for one reason or another he came in contact with. They might be poor relatives, but it went well beyond poor relatives—somebody that he felt was both capable and deserving. I think he also did this in terms of institutional philanthropy. For example, he gave to [naming the university]. He clearly transitioned from what I call personal to the institutional. Whereas, I favor Western or American forms of philanthropy in the sense that it has been almost entirely institutional. (Personal Communication, June 17, 2010)

Overall, the level of adaptation in mainstream society determined Chinese American patterns of giving. American society encourages civic engagement and provides tax brackets that further professional philanthropy. As immigrants become more acquainted with mainstream culture and norms, they are more likely to practice American traditions of professional philanthropy. Lu said:

It's a matter of how comfortable you feel in your community. Immigrants of all nationalities who don't particularly feel comfortable in their adopted country yet, if they have a capacity to give, they will give to their own community. So, Chinese immigrants will give, too. If you are in Chinatown you will give to Six Companies or something like that. It's not only until you feel you're part of a larger community that you will consider giving to things like Red Cross or you know your church whatever. And then when you really feel established then you will look at the larger causes. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

Her family philanthropy has explicitly followed this trend, a generational transition from personal to institutional philanthropy. As generations progress, philanthropic priorities and destinations expanded tremendously. Her great-grandfather gave largely to resolve poverty and natural disaster issues in his hometown in mainland China. In contrast, she continued:

Now three or four generations later, I would say that our first priority is education. There is a change. But you've also gone from somebody who really fought in terms of their town or village maybe their province to now where we look more globally. I still have family in Hong Kong and have distant relatives in China so we think now in terms of Hong Kong, China, and the United States. So it's a much broader outlook. (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010)

The perception of Chinese American giving as "small, private, and personal" is inconclusive. While one donor agreed that Chinese American giving remains small, others argued that this assumption results from economic disparity within Chinese immigrants. Unlike post-1965 student immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan, a majority of pre-1965 first-wave and post-1965 refugee immigrant groups struggled in the host country. With a combination of language proficiency, cultural inadaptability, and inflexible mobility in the labor market, they ended up taking low-wage jobs at grocery stores, laundromats, and restaurants, leaving them insufficient funds to distribute major gifts. Even if they gave to charitable causes, they had just enough resources to give

“small” gifts. Besides economic factors, Chinese American communities lack visible philanthropic leadership. Because there is an absence of role models, mainstream society assumes that Chinese Americans do not give large amounts. In fact, a majority of donors interviewed for this study noted that Chinese Americans do give large gifts when they perceive needs. A case in point is the Sichuan earthquake in 2008. More than 11 billion dollars were given in the name of charity for the earthquake relief. Donors claimed that Chinese Americans have money, and they have the potential to make large gifts.

In terms of “private” Chinese American giving, several donors argued that people prefer anonymity for security reasons. With the Communist influence and recent accusation of a Yale alumnus, Chinese American donors tend to be more cautious about releasing information on charitable giving in the U.S. Nevertheless, one donor noted that complete privacy in the United States is no longer feasible; institutions will find you regardless. Indeed, many donors perceived an increasing number of Chinese American donors becoming public about their contributions. They believed that publicizing their gifts will demonstrate philanthropic leadership, encouraging awareness within the Chinese American community while promoting visible Chinese Americans philanthropic leadership in the mainstream.

Many donors agreed with earlier presumptions about “personal” Chinese American giving; Chinese Americans giving predominantly developed through family and friend relationships. Donors believed that Chinese Americans are self-protective about their accumulated wealth, that the money should be spent on family causes rather than to provide public goods. Donors related such statements with the development of philanthropy in mainland China. Unlike the U.S., China lacks established structures to

promote professional philanthropy, such as fundraising professionals, nonprofit organizations, and tax policies. As a result, people had no other ways but to give to personal causes, supporting their family members and friends in their home town. Yet, several second, third, and fourth generation philanthropists perceived notable generational transformations. They stated that over multiple generations, Chinese American giving has transitioned from personal to institutional; earlier generation philanthropists primarily assisted individual family and friend units, while later generations give more broadly to mainstream organizations.

### **Impact of International Chinese Students on Chinese American Philanthropy**

Another aspect of Chinese American philanthropy entails internationalization, the recent growth in the number of Chinese students from mainland China studying in the U.S. The record showed that in 2009, a total number of 127,628 students enrolled in U.S. universities and colleges. Chinese comprised the largest group of international students, followed by Indians and Koreans (Open Doors Report, 2010). How do donors perceive the impact of this rapid expansion of Chinese international students on Chinese American philanthropy? Chinese American donors interviewed for this study revealed mixed opinions about the impact of growing student immigration. The following section summarizes 1) minimal and 2) positive effects of international Chinese students on Chinese American giving.

## **Minimal Effects on Future Chinese American Giving**

Several donors perceived a minimum impact, stating that recent immigrants are still relatively young and are not in positions to give economically. Except for students from wealthy family backgrounds, most student immigrants self-finance their education in the U.S, and there is no guarantee they will secure well-paying jobs after graduation. Because of these factors, donors argued that recent immigrants rarely have financial resources to support charitable causes. When asked about the impact of growing international student numbers, Rong hesitated before saying:

The reason I am thinking harder is because of the students that come over depend on the family background. If they are people of wealth, or if when they go back they get much more wealth, then there's an easy, translatable loyalty to the university in financial means. In China right now, unless you're in private industry and you make a lot of money, you can go back and end up with a low-paid job. (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010)

The fact that recent international Chinese students self-fund their education in the U.S. generates another drawback. Since they receive no financial support from U.S. institutions, these students possess minimal obligations to give back to their alma mater. Ong reiterated this point. Historically, his high school offered three full scholarships to Chinese international students. Many of these scholarship recipients are now successful individuals who also became generous supporters of the school. He said:

For these early ones, it was such an opportunity for them. So there is a sense of, I think, obligation to the institution that provided that. But I don't know these current students coming. Also the current students from PRC, this has only changed very rapidly in the last ten years, they are fully-paid. In other words, they pay full tuition whereas early ones were totally on scholarship. (Personal Communication, June 17, 2010)

Chu stated that this lack of financial support for Chinese internationals is present at university levels. To him, his donation focuses more exclusively on native Chinese American students. When asked how the growth of Chinese students in U.S. institutions affects Chinese American philanthropy, he said:

I think international students, they have never gotten support from the university. They paid their own way. I get emails all the time asking for help.... International students get in a lot, but they can't afford it, and I don't know how to help them. And my inclination is to help American-born students as opposed to internationals. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

Another donor further noted the minimal impact resulting from immigrants' places of origin. In Cai's point of view, recent immigrants from mainland China tend to be rather self-protective and less likely to dedicate their wealth outside of their family members.

Cai said:

My general perceptions of people from China are, I almost feel they are less generous because of the hardships they went through. They watch their pocket much tighter. One dollar is a lot for them. Because of the Communist system, I almost feel, I don't know the right word but they're more selfish watching themselves than watching out for the public goods. That's the effect of the communist ruling there. They are very sharp in finding where to get a benefit, how they can benefit themselves and get ahead that kind of things. I don't know how generously they will come to giving. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

### **Positive Effects on Future Chinese American Giving**

Several donors argued that a growth of international students will generate positive effects on Chinese American philanthropy. Guo perceived that younger generations, including international students, are socially more focused. Her son, for example, has been actively involved with volunteer activities both domestically and

internationally. She considered that such common values of helping others will bring positive trends for new generations both from the U.S. and overseas.

Another notable trend is former graduates of American institutions in China giving internationally to their alma maters in the U.S. This includes Chinese entrepreneurs, former student immigrants who returned back to their home country after the dot-com collapse in 2000. Pan said:

A lot of time it's sort of a major event causing things to change. For instance, the reason a lot of these entrepreneurs returned to China was because of the bubble in 2000. When the bubble burst in Silicon Valley, a lot of them were laid off or lost their dream, and they returned to China. They brought fresh ideas and experiences, and even started the same company, same type of businesses... You know, more and more of the Chinese companies are going to become the Fortune 100 of the world. I'm sure more donations will become available, obviously in China, which is a topic they are, as a society, very focused on, and back to a lot of their schools here as well. (Personal Communication, July 3, 2010)

Additionally, former student immigrants are now sending their children back to U.S. institutions. Although they live overseas, these individuals feel grateful for not only their own but also for their children's educational experiences in the U.S. Liu elaborated this new trend. She said:

I know now that in the past it has been very hard for American educational institutions to get students who have studied here and went back to Asia to give back to the alma maters. Because so often when they become successful, their philanthropy tends to be targeted to their home countries. So, they don't give back to U.S. institutions. We found out that as these very successful Asians are now sending their children to America and many of these kids are actually staying in the U.S. building lives here, careers here, they become very grateful and are now beginning to support. Especially if the second generation is going to the alma mater, the alma mater has now turned out two generations for the family. They are beginning to be more grateful, to recognize those institutions, and be more generous. (Personal Communication, July 14, 2010)

Sun further argued the positive outcome of supporting Chinese international students. He discussed that if international students received support from the community, they would help promote positive images of Chinese and Asian descendants in the U.S. He said:

I think we ought to be encouraged to give funds that may support these groups. I think it's in our interest because it helps the image of Asian Americas, that we have transnationalism so to speak. That these students come over, and many of them may want to study here and become a part of Asian America. Even if they don't, they can still go back and tell about the goodwill they found from their fellow Asians who are Americans now. I think there's still a lot that can be done in that area. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

Donors' perceptions regarding internationalization of Chinese American philanthropy presented complex views. Several donors perceived a minimum impact because of immigrants' economic capacity. Given their family background and economic status of their county, donors posit that recent student immigrants are not in the position to give. Even if they accumulated enough wealth, they have fewer obligations to give to U.S. institutions because they did not receive any financial support. They will prefer to give to other causes that they feel personally are more meaningful or obligated.

Still, several donors perceived positive impacts of internationalization. They believed that growing populations of Chinese international students will generate philanthropic awareness among Chinese Americans. One notable trend is diaspora giving<sup>1</sup> by former student immigrants, giving to U.S. higher education from their home country/regions. Among these include successful entrepreneurs in China who went back to their country after an economic downturn, as well as parents of students enrolled in U.S. higher education. A combination of sincere gratitude for personal and family

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<sup>1</sup> Diaspora philanthropy includes: "(1) charitable giving from individuals who reside outside their homeland, who (2) maintain a sense of identity with their home country, (3) give to causes or organizations in that country, and (4) give for public benefit" (Johnson, 2007, p. 5).

educational opportunities in the U.S. triggered returned immigrants to support U.S. higher education. In line with diaspora giving by former student immigrants, donors believed that giving to international Chinese students studying in U.S. institutions will empower Chinese American communities. When international students feel they receive support from the community, they will help promote positive images of Chinese descendants in the U.S. Giving to international students will produce multiplier-effects for the Chinese American community, and thus generate significant effects on Chinese American philanthropy.

### **Donor Perceptions of Effective University Fundraising Strategies**

The interviews further explored donors' perceptions of effective fundraising strategies targeting Chinese Americans. As successful donors to U.S. higher education, how do they think U.S. universities and colleges can better attract additional supports from Chinese American prospects? What kind of strategies did they find effective? Were there any strategies that discouraged their giving behaviors? Chinese American donors interviewed for this study suggested professional "give and take" strategies and universities "giving" to Chinese American students and alumni before "taking" from senior prospects.

### **University "Giving" to Chinese American Students**

Donors stated that introducing the concept of philanthropy to students is the first stage of fundraising. Universities need to create campus climates that celebrate the value of voluntary support. Although college students are not economically capable of giving,

shared acknowledgement of philanthropic needs generate future contributions. A supporter of American and Taiwanese universities, Cai said:

I think this concept of giving, you have to teach kids in college. You have to start early. Because by the time you're 50 and you don't have that concept, you're not going to give. It's just too late. They have to have the concept, they may not have the capability while they're young, but the concept has to be pounded into them at a younger age. They will say, "Gee, I wish I could give if I have more money." And by the time they are more relaxed financially, they will do what they thought should be doing. (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010)

The question then becomes how to teach this concept of philanthropy to students. Cai's suggestion is to offer a course on philanthropy and fundraising that "talks about the charity and public contribution, and basically how you pay back to the society that type of lecture or class" (Personal Communication, May 14, 2010). This sense of campus community is central to philanthropic contributions. Donors give because they feel emotionally attached to the institution. As a member of the campus "family," students feel an obligation to give back for the sake of preceding family members. Dong said, "In order to effectively solicit Chinese American funds, universities need to start with students. That is, they need to build up a sense of community and the obligation to give back to the community" (Personal Communication, July 2, 2010).

### **University "Giving" to Chinese American Alumni**

The second stage involves "giving" to alumni for further strengthened relationships. One way is to demonstrate institutional involvement with the Chinese and Asian American communities. Universities could acknowledge the community by resolving issues among Chinese and Asian American students specifically. If Chinese American alumni perceive university's contributions to their descendants, alumni will

feel more inclined to support their alma mater. Sun is a generous supporter of Chinese and Chinese American students. He no longer gives to his alma mater institutionally because of his lack of emotional attachment. When asked about effective university fundraising strategies for Chinese Americans. Sun said:

I think they should acknowledge, first of all, that the Asian American community is getting to be more and more of a presence in this country and have needs. So many of them apply for college, and they are in needs. A lot of them do have needs. I think they should be willing to solicit funds on that basis of approaching the Chinese American communities or Asian communities to help with that part of their population, and set up funds for Asian American students specifically... I think people like myself maybe, I will be more inclined to give to the [naming the university] if they set up a fund that said if you give to this, it will specifically go to the Asian American community who show a need for funds. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

In order to foster alumni's loyalty, universities need an effective development office that reconnects alumni to the university campus. Fong is a generous supporter and a founder of the local Chinese American alumni chapter. When asked about ideal fundraising strategies, he said:

First you should have a good development office. You know, keeping contact, the information, you have a certain program to invite them to, like homecoming, invite them to form a local chapter of alumni like what I did with the Chinese American chapter here... The key of that is that after they graduate, try to bring them back to schools, give them more attachments. Keep sending them ballgame tickets. You always have homecoming events, so invite them. Don't forget to give them the school newsletters. Ask them to be involved. (Personal Communication, May 11, 2010)

### **Developing Targeted Strategies for Chinese American Donors**

More specifically, development offices need targeted strategies for Chinese American donors based on their ethnic, professional, and personal interests. The ethnic-specific alumni programs promote institutional attachments among Chinese American

alumni, particularly among those who feel a strong affinity to the Chinese American community. Chu said:

Here in the United States, I don't think they look at us any differently than other alumni. They are not doing anything "special" for us. I mean they support the Asian Alumni Association but that's not really for fundraising purposes. They have not thrown parties for Asian donors, put it that way, at least that I know of. Something like that will make you feel like you're kind of exclusive, privileged or elite. They haven't done anything like that. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

Other donors mentioned ethnic-specific alumni associations as another form of celebrating cultural heritage. A founder of a local Chinese American alumni club, Fang highlighted his university's initiatives on developing ethnic-specific alumni associations.

He continued:

If you keep asking them they will be involved. You help them build associations. And then you can invite 60 people at one time. When you graduate from the university, you're 22 or 24 years old maximum right, and for the first ten years they have to survive. If you're asking for gifts, they are not the age group, but for those, just give them contacts. Keep their email addresses. Tell them what's happening in schools. When people really want to give is when they're 45 years old or above. (Personal Communication, May 11, 2010)

Additionally, universities could celebrate Chinese heritage by promoting Chinese and Asian American leadership in the university administration. As mentioned above, a nomination of a Chinese American leader at a public university attracted tremendous amounts of donations from Chinese American donors. Likewise, universities could "give" to alumni through appointing Chinese and Asian American leaders in administrative positions. A generous supporter of several universities in the U.S., Lu said:

As a sophisticated donor, I am looking at the leadership of the university and whether or not they have the world view and can understand the cultural differences. Not just amongst Chinese but you want the leader who takes the whole university and excels. That means not just with Chinese but Europeans and

whatever. So, the leadership really matters. Right now, the universities are not going to do anything until the donors start asking. I am starting to get more interested in how we can push the universities to do this. (Personal Communications, May 31, 2010)

Overall, Chinese American donors promoted ethnic-specific alumni programs that recognize perceived needs and accomplishments of Chinese and Asian Americans. A generous supporter and board member of his alma mater, Ma grouped such initiatives into “collective” programs that acknowledge “my people, my group” (Personal Communications, June 24, 2010). When asked about effective fundraising strategies for Chinese American donors, he said:

I think it has to be more of a collective program and that it has to be directed to Asian Americans to increase giving. Because if the universities don’t know how many students over time from Chinatown or from the Asian community graduate, then why should they ask for money? You’re contributing to something else. If there’s anything I learned about charitable causes is that, hey, make sure it helps my people, my group. (Personal Communications, June 24, 2010)

Besides cultural factors, universities could “give” to donors’ professional and personal interests. Alumni affiliate to different types of interest groups, ranging from cultural institutions and nonprofit organizations to business enterprises. Universities should develop alumni programs that align with these different affiliate groups. Chu said:

I think any way they can to connect with you through affinity groups, through ethnicity, through anything, any kind of professional interests, sports, if you want to. I think you do something for social workers that will be interesting. There are many ways of connecting and getting them involved with the life of the university. It’s just got to be creative. I think ethnicity and race is just only one aspect. A lot of Asians don’t want to be identified with other Asians. I’m not joining the Asian group. I am by myself. I’m an individual. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

Concurrently, universities need to “give” by acknowledging distinguished alumni who have made remarkable contributions. A case in point is Rong, one of the one hundred

university fellows at this alma mater. To him, this university fellowship fostered his institutional loyalty. He said:

I am an Olive University Fellow... If you are a part of the Olive Fellows, the Chancellor treats you to a free dinner... Then you get to go, you rub elbows with others, and that's one way to build a loyalty to the university... You sort of are the part of organizations' family, and it's prestigious. You know, you honor them, and hopefully by keeping them informed of exciting things your organization does and is doing and future needs, they will consider leaving you something behind to support the organization further. (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010)

The ultimate goal of institutional "giving" is to reconnect alumni to the campus community. With ethnically, professionally, and personally-targeted programs, university development offices need to appeal to different groups of alumni and their interests. A co-founder of ethnic-specific and campus-wide alumni associations, Chu said:

You got to go out there and say I want to do things for you. I want you to come back, I want you to come to a lecture, come to an event, and participate. Help out students, whatever, right? You know people have different motivations to do certain things. You got to appeal to the entire life cycle of what their interest may be throughout their careers. You have multitudes of events, activities, clubs and stuffs, organizations to appeal to them. You're going to connect with them somehow. When we do that, then I think their loyalty increases and their propensity to give increases. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

The above-mentioned institutional "giving" reconnects young alumni to their alma maters and enhances their emotional attachment. When alumni recognize a shared vision and perceived needs, they will become part of the university "family." Rong said:

I do think the model of having your alumni feel they're still part of their family, that you could rub shoulders, you're now accepted into a higher peer group are often things you have to consider. You may have young people. Young people like to have fun so to get them to come together; you should create fun activities under the university umbrella.... You could sponsor a bowling league or whatever

young people like to do and call it a university chapter bowling team. Then you have to be willing for long-term reasons, so spend money short time. (Personal Communication, June 30, 2010)

### **Involving Chinese American Community Leaders in “Asking”**

After universities successfully integrate Chinese American alumni into their “family” networks, the proceeding stage entails professional “taking,” soliciting monetary gifts for university development. University presidents, deans, faculty, and development officers are all key actors who identify and strategize fundraising efforts. Besides these university personnel, donors suggested involving prominent Chinese American leaders. Chinese traditional beliefs celebrate absolute obedience and respect for elder members of the community. If these Chinese American leaders from the community or business enterprises engage in asking, prospects will have a hard time rejecting their offers. Personal interactions with Chinese American leaders is by far the most effective way to stimulate prospects’ sense of obligation and to generate additional financial support. When asked about effective fundraising strategies, Ma said:

You know what will help? You have to get prominent Asian Americans involved in asking other people to give. Not only development officers. Let’s say in [state], there are two principle Chinatowns. The Chinese already know who the prominent citizens in Chinatown are. You need them to ask. You need to cultivate that because Asians are still influenced by elders or other prominent Asian Americans you know really well... You almost need some leaders to step up and to stand out and be willing to do that. (Personal Communication, June 24, 2010)

### **Recruiting Development Officers with Cultural Sensitivity**

Beyond Chinese American leadership, donors suggested that universities need to recruit development officers who understand Chinese American culture and norms.

Effective development officers for Chinese American donors do not necessarily have to

be Chinese Americans. More importantly, these are individuals who understand cultural nuances that are unique to Chinese American donors. To Sun, qualified candidates are those who are actively involved in the Chinese American community, people who are very well-networked and well aware of communal needs. He said:

I think these development officers should be people who are active in the Asian American community. I think that should be the main qualification there. I think vetting processes for those people might be through an organization like [APA nonprofits] or whatever would endorse them or not. It's just people who really care about community and about higher education for students of the Asian community. (Personal Communication, June 9, 2010)

In Liu's view, traditional fundraising strategy by itself is ineffective for Chinese American donors. In addition to traditional fundraising skills, development officers need to understand and apply cultural sensitivity in their fundraising practices. Development offices could rely on sophisticated Chinese American supporters of their institutions to help identify individuals who have both traditional and cultural competencies. When asked about the influence of ethnicity in fundraising, Lu said:

I think the American approach for many Chinese donors would not work very well. You need to know how to wine and dine and then when to ask. And it's different for different people. Part of it is cultural, part of it is personal. So you really have to have both skills. And some Americans have that: you can really understand the cultural niceties but not all of them, whereas most Chinese who grow up will understand. If they don't know they know who to ask... Find a really good either Chinese American or American who lived in China who is in development who understands the cultural nuances. Or, find a Chinese American donor who has very enthusiastically supported your organization who can help you develop an Asian initiative and help you hire somebody who can understand it. I met a lot of non-Chinese Americans who lived in China who could be very good at doing this because they really get it. But I don't think I ever met any American non-Chinese in development who could do as good of a job. (Personal Communication, May 31, 2010)

## **Avoid “Asking” and Build Trustworthy Personal Relationships**

Throughout this “taking” process, universities should not ask for monetary donations directly, but instead focus on developing trustworthy personal relationships. Fang is involved in fundraising for his alma mater in Taiwan. When asked for his fundraising strategies, he said, “I never ask for money, but the money comes!” (Personal Communication, May 11, 2010). He said that prospects will contribute whenever they establish emotional connections with their alma mater. Fang shared one successful fundraising story of a Taiwanese professor who utilized an indirect approach of “asking” and focused on forming reliable relationships with alumni overseas. Though this example is from a Taiwanese university, the implication is relevant for U.S. universities and colleges. He said:

One of the professors from Indigo University asked me how to get donations. I always encourage them to come to the United States, travel to a few cities, and go and see your previous students or professors. So he, like me, doesn’t ask for money. He only asks, are you happy now? He doesn’t even ask, are you successful, or do you have money on the table, or how’s your business? He only wants to know, are you happy? I mean that’s the most important thing in life. That’s pretty effective. You don’t ask for a check. You cannot be direct or straight.... So it’s not for donation purposes, but it’s really keeping this relationship that is more important. (Personal Communication, May 11, 2010)

Then, how do we know when donors are ready to make commitments? Are there any ways to detect the philanthropic inclinations of Chinese American alumni?

Unsurprisingly, donors interviewed for this study noted that there is no right timing for successful fundraising. One donor mentioned that donors themselves are unable to predict when they will be ready to give. This is the reason why building sustainable relationships with identified prospects becomes extremely important. Universities need

to have established relationships in order to attract prospects' giving incentives when the time comes. Kao said:

There is no right timing. You never know when they will be ready. You just have to continue to have interactions with them. Say hi to them, invite them to this and that. I have seen so many cases where a family gives a few thousand or maybe a hundred thousand in the last ten years, and suddenly they give about five million. They have the money, but they think they may not be ready. After ten years, they think that they are ready. But they will not tell you. That's the reason you never know when the right timing is. This means university advancement will never know the good timing. The family who would like to give doesn't know what the right timing is. I have seen this. (Personal Communication, July 1, 2010)

Overall, fundraising strategies for Chinese Americans involve sustaining person-to-person connections, providing an intellectual "home" for college students, and inviting young alumni back to "family" gatherings. Alumni give to their alma mater because of educational experiences and a firm belief that college made a significant difference in their lives. If schools continue to appeal to alumni's emotional attachments, philanthropic initiatives will develop accordingly. When asked about effective fundraising strategies for Chinese Americans, Chu said:

It's personal relationships, I think. Most people have a good experience or good memories of their college life. If they don't, they still feel that [naming the university] has made a difference.... I think you appeal to that, I think somewhere along the way, you strike a right code. It will activate the impulse to give and to give back... It's not like you send them a letter and say give me money. They are not going to do it. I send some letters. They are going to say who are you? They don't even know me. What shall I give? I give a hundred dollars. So I say OK. They don't know me. But you know once you get a hundred dollars, you get the guy to start, and then you have a better chance of getting him into the habit. (Personal Communication, May 24, 2010)

Donors' perceptions of effective fundraising strategies for Chinese Americans present practical implications. University development needs to employ a professional give-and-

take approach, giving to students and alumni before taking from prospects. The primary role of universities is to introduce philanthropic concepts to students. Encouraging volunteer activities, allocating financial support, and connecting scholarship recipients with donors all empower philanthropic awareness among students and engage them with the campus “family.” Students’ emotional ties with affiliated institutions eventually cultivate philanthropic incentives. Development offices have a critical role in continuing “giving” to Chinese American alumni. Universities need to develop alumni programs that appeal to different ethnic, professional, or personal interests of this particular population. Ethnic-specific initiatives, such as Chinese or Asian American alumni associations, Chinese American leaders in university administration, and educational support for Chinese and Asian American students, are all suggested “giving” efforts to attract alumni who feel strong attachments to the Chinese American community. Universities also need to develop targeted strategies that speak to specific interests and needs among Chinese American alumni, including professional common-interest groups, collaborative research projects, and invitations to university sporting events. The ultimate purpose of these “giving” stages is to nurture philanthropic concepts and attachments among students and alumni.

Once universities successfully cultivate alumni’s emotional ties, the following stage involves professional “taking,” the solicitation of monetary contributions. Universities need targeted strategies to identify and solicit funds from prospects. The university president, dean, and faculty are key actors in institutional fundraising. Each one of these university representatives need to work collaboratively to identify the best strategy for Chinese American prospects. In this process, donors suggested that

universities should seek help from prominent Chinese American leaders in the community. When these individuals approach Chinese American prospects, the prospects are less likely to reject proposals because of societal obligations and Chinese traditional respect for elders. Donors throughout the study noted that effective development officers do not necessarily have to be Chinese Americans but need to integrate professional fundraising skills and cultural competencies that are unique to Chinese Americans. Development officers should employ cultural sensitivity in Chinese American giving. For instance, donors interviewed for this study argued that direct asking in fundraising is not effective. Instead, they need focus on sustaining reliable relationships with Chinese American prospects. Personal connections are by far the most crucial because there is no right timing for fundraising. In fact, donors described themselves as unaware of the right timing to give. Universities must sustain personal relationships so that when the time comes, prospects will return value to the relationship with their alma mater.

## **CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION**

This chapter discusses four myths of Chinese American donor behavior in the context of the findings of this project. The first myth explores “traditional” and “non-traditional” characteristics of Chinese American donors. The second myth examines the presumed “small, private, and personal” patterns of Chinese American giving (Koehn & Yin, 2002). The third myth highlights generational factors in Chinese American giving: the supposition that first-generation Asian Americans are more likely to support ethnic-specific causes in their hometowns while second generation and beyond are more likely to support mainstream organizations (Chao, 1999). The fourth myth explores the impact of rapid growth of international Chinese students studying in the U.S. on Chinese American giving. The chapter argues that some of the myths are valid, while many assumptions are incorrect. The chapter also gives suggestions for universities and colleges in the U.S. to adjust their fundraising strategies based on the findings of this research.

### **Myth 1: Chinese Americans Donors are “Non-traditional”**

Considering the above discussions, how do theoretical explanations of “traditional” and “non-traditional” donor motivations apply to Chinese American philanthropic behaviors? The findings of this project reveal that Chinese American donors are not solely non-traditional, but integrate both traditional and non-traditional motivations of giving. Analysis of traditional and non-traditional Chinese American donor behaviors demonstrates different levels of incentives. While altruism, personal benefits, psychological incentives, giving capacity, and culture exist as underlying factors

motivating Chinese American donor behaviors, personal attachment and reciprocity more consistently determine Chinese American motivations to support U.S. higher education.

### **Altruism, Personal Benefits, Positive Psychological Beliefs, Giving Capacity and Culture Underlying Chinese American Donor Motivation**

Altruism, personal benefits, psychological benefits, giving capacity, and culture are present as incentives motivating Chinese American donor behaviors; however, these factors are rooted in personal, cultural, and societal obligations within mainstream American society.

#### *Altruistic Incentives Remain Central to Chinese American Donors*

Altruism in Chinese American contexts shapes reciprocal incentives among Chinese Americans in supporting mainstream American society. The dominant theory of the pure altruism model celebrates one-sided forms of “selfless” altruism; donors give solely to maximize public goods for the benefits of others. Chinese Americans, however, exercise two-sided altruism. During the interviews, Chinese American donors traced today’s success to their educational, economic, and societal opportunities obtained in the States. As benefactors of American society, donors felt a strong desire to give back and to help less fortunate people. Yet, Chinese American altruistic behaviors vary from self-interests or reciprocal incentives discussed later in this chapter. While personal benefits and reciprocity produced support for more specific student populations or academic units, altruistic behaviors benefit the entirety of society. This indicates that society needs to build a platform to nurture altruistic behaviors among Chinese Americans--for instance,

by developing supporting mechanisms for younger generations who will eventually be in position to give back.

*Chinese American Giving Incorporates a Notion of Self-Interest*

While not explicitly emphasized in interview communications, Chinese Americans give to acquire personal benefits. This finding supports earlier studies on the impure altruism model. The impure altruism model reveals additional self-interest motivation of donors, including tax incentives, social approval, and the establishment of new networks. Parallel to this model, Chinese American giving entails a notion of “self.” Chinese American donors give for “others,” but in a way that benefits donors themselves. For instance, Chinese American giving elicited personal acknowledgements from U.S. society. While major gift donors sought acknowledgements from naming opportunities, other donors preferred recognition from fellow community members and classmates. Also, donors received tax-deductions for both domestic and international gifts. Additionally, the predominant Chinese American giving to an alma mater parallels with donors’ desire for personal acknowledgements. They believe that gifts strengthen the school reputation and consequently elevate the value of their diploma.

It is important to note that Chinese American donors seek personal benefits in mainstream American society as opposed to seeking personal benefits from contributions abroad. Although donors interviewed for this study possessed cultural beliefs and values and also gave to Chinese-specific causes, predominant patterns of giving remained “American,” giving to causes tied to personal benefits within U.S. contexts.

What these theories suggest is that Chinese American donors' satisfaction maximizes when they feel certain about the significance of their contribution to the community. Of interest is that Chinese American philanthropic strategies for instigating community changes are decidedly more targeted than Western equivalents. These specific targets arise from close-knit, interpersonal connections with the communities to which Chinese American donors belong or to which they wish to belong. Thus, donor recognition from a recipient institution is not sufficient. Rather, Chinese Americans prefer to individually experience the impact of their gifts as they manifest from within the community.

#### *Chinese American Donors Share a "Joy-of-Giving"*

Another underlying factor of Chinese American giving includes donors' psychological satisfaction, or the so-called "joy-of-giving." Psychological research emphasizes donors' positive beliefs in supporting perceived needs. The donating behavioral model states that donors believe in the importance of giving. Similarly, the model of personal donorship introduces incentive experiential motivators, or the "joy of giving." Reason action theorists highlight donors' positive beliefs in the consequences of giving. Once donors identify positive reasons to support, including perceived need or social recognition, they become more philanthropic. Similarly, planned behavior theorists demonstrate that donating intentions relate to social pressure and moral obligations. When donors feel external pressure and obligation, they develop stronger intentions to give. The theory of prosocial behavior demonstrates additional determinant

factors of donor behavior, including the group size, individual attachment to a group, and cohesiveness.

In alignment with these research perspectives, Chinese Americans give to universities and colleges in the U.S. because of a sense of shared responsibility to help other underrepresented students and professionals. Some donors interviewed for this study were former student immigrants who came from low-income family backgrounds. To them, higher education opportunities in the U.S. shaped and transformed their lifelong potential for success. Donors strongly appreciate the notion of having the capacity to give to perceived need. This is further supported by the finding that Chinese Americans are more likely to give restricted gifts. Donors' self-satisfaction maximizes when they make a difference in fields related to their interests. In other words, Chinese American gifts represent donors' professional, cultural, or personal obligations. This is the reason why identifying individual donors' beliefs and interests become extremely critical. Rather than soliciting general annual funds, universities and colleges need to recruit targeted pools of prospects that possess shared values in respective fields.

#### *Giving Capacity Reflects Levels of Chinese American Giving*

Although not a primary motivation of giving, donors' capacity reflects the levels of Chinese American giving. Overall, the analysis of giving capacity reveals similar characteristics between Chinese American and "traditional" donors. Earlier studies of "traditional" donor behaviors have revealed that as a person advances further in age and life-cycle, the level of charitable contributions increases, specifically indicating retirement ages in the 50's as a frequently-shared instigating characteristic. Although the

findings remain inconclusive, other demographic characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, educational background, employment status, marital status, U.S. citizenship, and civic engagements correlate with donor behavior. Those who are female, an ethnic majority, highly educated, employed, married, holders of U.S. citizenship, and engaged in civic activities are more likely to support their alma mater when compared to their counterparts.

Similarly, the majority of donors in this study were in their fifties or above, and some already had approached their retirement age. Generally speaking, donors were highly educated individuals. All of the participants earned bachelor degrees or higher; several earned MBA's or Ph.D.'s. Donors majored predominantly in the fields of science, engineering, and business, and were less likely to major in the humanities and social science. During college, several donors received scholarships or fellowships while others self-financed their education. Volunteer activities during college were less common among many of the donors. For most of them, voluntary commitments started at a later age. Currently, all of the donors interviewed for this study serve on boards of university and/or nonprofit organizations. Recipient institutions recognize these donors' voluntary contributions with prestigious awards and medals. More than half of the donors interviewed for this study own venture capital firms, while several others are senior officers of international corporations. Select others included a physician, a university faculty, and a federal employee. A majority of donors are married and have children. All of the donors interviewed for this study are U.S. citizens. The immigration history of each of these donors presents a complex narrative; at different times in life, donors moved back and forth from the U.S. and China for educational and familial reasons. What is different from "traditional" characteristics of alumni is that the Chinese

American donors interviewed for this study are ethnic minorities and more often male than female.

Overall, Chinese American donors' giving capacity and socio-economic characteristics determine Chinese American patterns of giving to U.S. higher education. All donors interviewed for this study gave to their alma-mate at, some point in their lives while only two donors supported institutions without any personal or familial affiliations. Additionally, a majority of donors interviewed for this study majored in business and STEM, and their gifts to U.S. higher education supported causes in these fields. Similarly, these individuals served on boards of trustees at their alma-maters and other higher education institutions. With monetary and voluntary supports combined, donors developed a greater influence shaping institutional priorities in business and STEM fields over humanities and liberal arts.

Obviously, it is misleading to conclude that the identified demographic characteristics of these Chinese American donors are potential targets of university fundraising. As mentioned in earlier sections, institutional solicitations must start with students and younger prospects even though they have lesser capacity to give. Chinese Americans are less likely to give support if they have no previous connection with universities and colleges. Fundraising strategies need to emphasize development of trustworthy relationships with students and younger alumni. One conclusion that can be drawn from the findings regarding donor capacity is that employed and highly-educated Chinese American prospects are more likely to contribute in their late 50's once they possess established emotional and physical connections with the recipient institution.

*Confucian Ideas of Education and Filial Piety Contribute to Chinese American Donor Behaviors*

Beyond “traditional” donor behaviors, non-traditional cultural factors contribute to the motivations of Chinese American giving. More specifically, Chinese American donor behaviors feature three concepts from Confucianism, emphasizing education, filial piety, and self-effacement. Confucian teachings emphasize that education prepares a person to practice the “right things” while also rectifying social inequalities. Since first generation Chinese American immigrants struggled with racial discrimination because of their illiteracy and low educational attainment, they firmly believed that higher education would provide potential skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the U.S. As more Chinese Americans successfully matriculated into mainstream America, they assumed that prejudice against Chinese Americans based on educational factors would begin to decline. Chinese American donors believe that higher education produces immeasurable opportunities, particularly for students who come from low-income households and overseas. Giving to U.S. higher education reflects donors’ gratitude for educational opportunities in the U.S. and a shared responsibility on their part to facilitate equivalent opportunities for the next generation.

Additionally, Confucianism cherishes filial piety and, resultingly, Chinese Americans have a responsibility to financially support family or community members in times of need. Confucianism states that people engage in five relationships: ruler-subjects, father-son, husband-wife, elder and younger brother, and friend and friend (Ching, 1977, p. 96). Accordingly, filial responsibilities evolve from the family unit, friends, and the larger community. It is not coincidental, therefore, that Chinese American giving circles primarily encompass family and relatives, friends, and friends of friends, but not

strangers from other communities. Correspondingly, the findings of this study show that Chinese American giving embodies four of the relationships: husband and wife, father and son, elder and younger sibling, and friend and friend. Husband and wife relationships influence husbands' gifts to wives' alma maters while father and son relationships encourage gifts to parent funds. Sibling relationships initiate gifts to support programs with which elder siblings affiliate. Furthermore, close friendships generate additional Chinese American donations. Friends working in universities serve key roles in soliciting gifts from Chinese American donors. Notably, these family and friend ties have generated mega gifts, some exceeding 40 million dollars. The influence of filial piety, or a strong loyalty to one's family and friends, consistently motivates Chinese Americans to give large amounts of capital to U.S. higher education.

Other cultural explanations, in addition to those listed above, include the Confucian value of self-effacement. In Confucianism, exemplary persons celebrate frugality and despise fame and wealth. Confucian teachings require that generosity should be kept as a private matter. Accordingly, Chinese American giving is often perceived to be smaller in scale, more private, and more often founded on personal relationships when compared to Western patterns of giving.

Nevertheless, the findings from this study present a contradictory argument to the Confucian ideas of self-effacement. A vast majority of donors interviewed for this study celebrated publicity and personal benefits from charitable gifts. Chinese Americans gave for "others"—normally for extended people within the communities—but in a way that benefited the donors themselves. Additionally, Chinese American giving elicited personal acknowledgements from U.S. society. While major gift donors sought

acknowledgements from naming opportunities, other donors preferred recognition from fellow community members and classmates. Also, donors received tax-deductions for both domestic and international gifts. Additionally, the predominant forms of Chinese American giving to alma maters paralleled with donors' desire for personal acknowledgements. They believed that gifts strengthened the school reputation and consequently elevated the value of their diplomas. It is important to note that Chinese American donors sought personal benefits in mainstream American society as opposed to seeking personal benefits from contributions abroad.

Obviously, these three elements are not exceptional to Chinese American cultures. Many donors' communities share similar beliefs and values. The implication here is that Chinese American culture magnifies these three elements because of compounding Confucian influences. Still, it is important to note that donors interviewed for this study did not explicitly relate these elements to Confucianism. In fact, the word "Confucianism" was rarely mentioned during interviews. Their beliefs in education and fraternal responsibilities related more directly with Chinese traditional culture. To this end, this study demonstrates donors' differing magnitudes of ethnic identity. While some embrace a strong influence of Chinese culture in their giving, others perceive a minimum influence from Chinese heritage. Regardless, cultural factors did nurture philanthropic behaviors among Chinese American donors. Universities and colleges need to employ incentives that respond to different levels of donor cultural and ethnic identification. Thus, organizing ethnic-specific events and activities is not an absolute remedy to empower Chinese American giving. These programs are only effective for prospects who identify themselves as a part of the specific Chinese American community being

invited. To cultivate the best and more culturally sensitive strategies, recipient institutions must identify the magnitude of ethnic and cultural affinities of individual Chinese American donors.

### **Personal Attachment and Reciprocity Determines Chinese American Donor Motivation**

Personal attachment and reciprocity shapes major incentives among Chinese Americans donors. Chinese American gifts to U.S. higher education correspond to individual donors' reciprocal relationships and attachment to recipient institutions.

#### *Positive College Experiences Motivate Chinese American Donors*

Overall, reciprocity is one of the greatest determinant factors of Chinese American donor motivations. Chinese American donors give in response to education, resources, people, and relationships acquired throughout college. For Chinese Americans, receiving a charitable gift dictates an obligation to give back. As noted, this is the reason why many Chinese American donors indicate gratitude to their alma mater as one of their motivating factors, considering philanthropy as a way of reciprocating the favors that they had previously received. This supports the earlier argument of social exchange theory and reciprocal theory that highlights reciprocal donor relationships. These theories state that donors give not solely from their purely altruistic incentives but also in return for favors they have received. In the context of higher education, social exchange theory proposes that alumni give to reciprocate their gifts they received during college. More specifically, positive collegiate experiences as reflected from their active

involvements in extracurricular activities, positive interactions with faculty, and scholarship opportunities stimulate alumni philanthropic behavior. Beyond collegiate experiences, institutional prestige proves a significant determinant factor in alumni giving. Alumni believe that high-quality institutions are more likely to produce a social benefit out of their gifts.

Chinese American donors connect their gifts to their positive college experiences. Various material and humanistic resources acquired during college cultivate donors' career trajectories and consequently strengthen donors' desires to give back. Without financial support, some donors in this study had no other means by which to pursue advanced graduate degrees. For several donors, their mentors' guidance and advice contributed to their career paths. Especially for female donors, memories with their significant others during college enhanced their gratitude for universities and colleges. All of these incentives formed long-lasting donor relationships and triggered monetary contributions.

Overwhelmingly, Chinese American donors are more likely to give if they received institutional support during college. This finding reasserts that the initial step for successful fundraising is to build support mechanisms for university and college students. This study also found that Chinese Americans are more likely to give after they have reached retirement age. This means that donors require more than 25 years after graduation before they have established sufficient financial capacity to give back. During these years, graduates are unlikely to attend reunions or alumni events if they had negative college experiences. Alumni maintain relationships with their alma maters because of memorable experiences. This is the reason why universities and colleges need

to develop supporting mechanisms for Chinese American students specifically. Providing financial and academic support and organizing events and activities for this student population will help build the platform for social exchange between institutions and Chinese American students. Lack of formulated social exchange will not only discourage future giving from Chinese American alumni, but also shrink potentials to solicit additional contributions from other Chinese American prospects in the area.

*Institutional, Communal, and Personal Attachments Trigger Chinese American Donors*

Donor attachment is another major determinant in Chinese American giving. Looking back to the practice of Chinese American giving, early Chinese immigrants gave to support family and relatives in their hometowns. For them, charitable giving was one of the ways of representing self-attachment to their home countries. Over time, they came to realize the importance of Chinese economic and social stability on their status in mainstream countries. Accordingly, their gifts began to support scholarships and educational programs in higher education. Overall, historical trends of Chinese American giving--the transition to donating to higher education from primary and secondary schools, redirecting support of hometowns to eventually broader areas throughout the nation, building capacity over establishing of schools and facilities—all reflect the dual self-identification of Chinese Americans, connecting them as members of not only mainland Chinese culture but mainstream U.S. society and culture as well.

Similarly, Chinese American donors interviewed for this project gave because of their emotional attachment to their alma maters and the Asian American community. Additionally, this study revealed an emerging phenomenon in which donors expressed

strong personal attachments to their charitable gifts, encouraging closer management of their funds and significant involvement with the recipients. Chinese American donors' institutional attachment related to the findings of expectancy theory and the investment model that state the impact of institutional attachment in alumni giving.

An examination of expectancy theory reveals that institutional fundraising efforts positively correlate with the level of alumni giving. The investment model provides a notable finding that alumni-university relationships, whether in the past or present, stimulate alumni giving. Studies show that alumni who cherish a strong emotional tie to the university tend to: volunteer at their alma mater by serving on the board or volunteering at alumni events, have family ties to universities such as a spouse or children who are graduates, and had volunteered at the university while in college. Similarly, Chinese Americans prefer to commit their personal time in addition to monetary assets to universities. Many Chinese Americans serve on alumni associations, university foundations, advisory boards, and boards of trustees. By directly engaging with university administrations, Chinese American prospects evaluate the needs and perceived outcomes of a cause before making a decision to extend monetary support. In response to lifetime contributions, several donors have even received awards and medals. Frequently, board memberships function as channels by which donors reconnected with their alma mater.

Additionally, Chinese American donors' communal attachment parallels with the identification model that emphasizes donors' desire to identify with a group or community to which they belong. Such a notion of "we-ness" or a sense of belongingness helps them assure their positions in a group and potentially initiate new

associational networks. In other words, shared experience and traditional culture bond Chinese communal relationships and philanthropic practices. People give when they identify themselves as a member of Chinese and Asian American communities. For them, charitable giving is one way of representing self-attachment to their home countries. Over time, the connection between Chinese economic and social stability to status in other countries has been realized. Accordingly, their gifts have begun to support exchange scholarships and educational programs in higher education. Another form of community attachment is the celebration of Chinese American university leadership, as demonstrated in the appointment of the first Chinese American leader at a public university. Also, Chinese American donors demonstrate philanthropic leadership to students, the Chinese American community, and American society as a whole. As people of Chinese descent living in the U.S., giving to ethnic-specific causes in the U.S. is a legitimate way to acknowledge American affinity and to share Chinese culture with fellow Americans. Within the American context, donors strongly promote, celebrate, and share the richness of Chinese culture and leadership.

More significantly, the Chinese American donors interviewed for this study have introduced an additional factor of personal attachment: individual donors give to causes that resonate with their interests and expertise. This type of giving remains truly personal; some donors' targeted areas of individual or family interest while several others gave solely to a particular field in which they excelled. Additionally, Chinese American giving has developed via personal connections. Besides existing connections, donors establish new personal ties with people affiliated with the recipient institution. After giving, Chinese Americans maintain their personal involvement. For them, monetary

contributions are not the end of their association. It is a prologue of a forthcoming relationship with the recipient institution. Donors believe that personal involvement increases accountability. By serving in board memberships and giving to local institutions, Chinese Americans maintain personal input. A shared belief is that giving to local causes maximizes personal involvement while also minimizing time commitments. It is not coincidence, therefore, that Chinese American gifts to U.S. higher education largely benefited business and STEM fields. Many donors interviewed for this study majored in these fields and have retained physical ties through board memberships. Donors feel comfortable giving to these causes, driven by their appreciation of their educational experiences and their personal ties with people working for the causes.

A predominant influence of donor attachment asserts the importance of cultivating trustworthy relationships with individual Chinese American prospects. Overall, Chinese American gifts benefit donors' institutional, cultural, and personal affinities. Again, this parallels with the finding that Chinese American give rather restricted gifts to local alma maters. Additionally, Chinese American giving benefited endowment funds which allow donors to maintain and strengthen their emotional attachments.

It is important to note that Chinese American donors' emotional attachments develop over time. Institutional attachments emerge during college and further strengthen in the capacity of board memberships. Cultural attachment on the other hand, evolves at different time periods in life, but also expands with community and professional engagements. Personal attachments obviously develop before and after donors make monetary commitments. This is the reason why universities and colleges

must continuously encourage Chinese American students, community leaders, and prospects to become involved in different aspects of institutional operations. Fundraising efforts should also identify the differing destinations of donor attachments. For prospects with strong personal attachments, institutions could facilitate social gatherings for targeted professions, such as lawyers, business leaders, and teachers. Alternatively, institutions could develop a joint research project between for-and non-profit organizations and academic units. For prospects with strong cultural attachments, institutions could organize a networking event for ethnic minority professionals, university-wide Lunar New Year events, a dinner reception with Chinese and Chinese American university leaders, and Chinese and Chinese American alumni outings, etc. Clearly, these incentives further reinforce institutional attachments among prospects and facilitate personal connections with the university. Additionally, physical involvement enables participants to oversee the needs and efficacy of giving. While these institutional efforts nurture philanthropic impulse among students and younger prospects, perceived educational needs would attract more immediate support from individuals with sufficient financial capacities. Developing both physical and emotional attachments transitions to long-lasting philanthropic relationships with Chinese American donors.

## **Myth 2: Chinese American Giving is Small, Private, and Personal**

Earlier studies describe “small, private, and personal” types of Chinese American giving (Koehn & Yin, 2002). Previous discussions from this study on Chinese American giving patterns and donor perceptions revealed additional “large, public, and professional” aspects of philanthropy in Chinese American giving.

## **Chinese American Major Donors and “Large” Gifts**

Overall, Chinese American giving as documented in this study was substantive. Most donors interviewed for this study noted that historical and cultural factors developed this prevailing assumption. They explained that historically, pre-1965 immigrants and post-1965 refugee immigrants had limited resources to support charitable causes. Additionally, the absence of model philanthropists among Chinese Americans reinforced the mainstream assumption that Chinese Americans do not give. Today, not only do Chinese Americans have the economic capacity to give, but they give major gifts and they have untapped potential to generate even larger contributions. In fact, participants of this study are great examples of this emerging trend. This affluent groups of individuals, dominantly second generation and beyond and post-1965 immigrant groups, have become visible philanthropic leaders in their Chinese American communities. It is no coincident that Chinese Americans gave mega gifts of more than ten million dollars to celebrate Chinese leadership in U.S higher education and to demonstrate philanthropic leadership among Chinese American donors. They named their gifts after themselves or their family heritage to show that Chinese Americans do give major gifts. Clearly, the image of “small” Chinese American giving was no longer relevant among Chinese American philanthropists interviewed for this study. Unlike pre-1965 first-wave and post-1965 refugee immigrants, second generation and beyond and post-1965 former student immigrants have become undeniable generators of major gifts.

Nevertheless, we cannot neglect the fact that donors interviewed for this study were themselves major gift donors. These are extremely successful individuals who have given close to or more than half a million dollars. What we learned from this study

reflects views of selected “big” donors, not necessarily the rest of donor groups who give less. What became evident from this study, however, is the new image of major gift Chinese American donors who give “large” gifts to charity.

Clearly, there are significant contributions by Chinese American donors, but this information is not conveyed adequately in the public sphere. Universities and colleges must consider alternative ways to publicize Chinese American major gifts. Naming opportunities, thank you letters, and recognition in institutional publications should not be the dominant tools for acknowledgement. Other efforts such as inviting donors to events attended by recipient students, community leaders, and more importantly university leaders, will not only strengthen donors’ institutional attachments but demonstrate the impact of their gifts. Additionally, institutions must encourage sophisticated donors to become philanthropic leaders within the Chinese American community. Without visible leadership in the community, inaccurate perceptions regarding the scale of Chinese American giving persists throughout mainstream American society.

### **Chinese American Giving is “Private” but is Becoming Increasingly “Public”**

Chinese American donors discussed in this study had characteristics that were both private and public. While some donors recognized the prevailing trend of private Chinese American giving, a number of donors perceived an emerging trend of public giving among Chinese American major donors. Regarding private patterns of giving, some donors recognized that political and societal concerns promote “private” patterns of Chinese American giving. Major gift donors are afraid of public accusation, as in the

case of Lei Zhan, a Yale graduate who was publically criticized for giving nine million dollars to his alma mater in the U.S. In fact, several donors interviewed for this study gave anonymous gifts to U.S. higher education. During the interviews, some of them preferred to conceal the exact amount of their donation to U.S. higher education. Also, the methodological challenges faced in identifying and securing participants for this study reflect such “private” characteristics of Chinese American donors. Several donors abstained from participating in this study, citing concerns for disclosing information on their charitable activities.

Notably, interviews from this study revealed “public” aspects of Chinese American giving. Benefactors of major gifts named their contributions after themselves or their family members. Donors believe that publicizing their gifts demonstrates philanthropic leadership to the mainstream and invokes awareness throughout the Chinese American community. Also, these donors “publicly” became involved in university administration as board members and volunteers.

While earlier presumptions about “private” Chinese American giving remained true to a certain extent, we cannot neglect emerging groups of Chinese American donors who have become public in mainstream society. Emerging philanthropic leaders are becoming more open to publicity with the intent to empower fellow community members. This phenomenon certainly presents great opportunities for universities and colleges to promote visibility of Chinese American giving by publicizing Chinese American contributions among donors’ cohorts and friends. Since personal connections, or “guan-xi,” are an essential practice within many Chinese American communities, information regarding the gifts of their “friends” to educational institutions will provoke moral

obligations among others. Of course, universities and colleges must have established relationships with these prospects or else their efforts will fail to elicit reciprocal reactions. Publicizing Chinese American philanthropic leaderships will not only solicit additional gifts from other community members but will also portray more accurate images of Chinese American giving.

### **Chinese American Giving is both “Personal” and “Professional”**

Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education integrated both personal and professional aspects; a majority of donors from this study generated professional gifts, but through personal connections. Comparatively, predominant patterns of Chinese American giving have developed via personal family ties and friendships. Donors gave in response to a sincere gratitude for their and their family’s educational experiences. Additionally, several donors interviewed for this study supported causes that aligned with personal and familial interests and affinities, including a gift to the academic program led by donors’ siblings and the specific field of study that relates to family interests. In many ways, Chinese American giving has remained personal. Donors noted that this trend reflects the status of philanthropy in mainstream China, which is less structured in terms of nonprofit sectors and tax policies compared to the U.S. Because of fragile mechanisms with which to encourage professional giving in China, Chinese people give exclusively to family and friend networks.

Nevertheless, emerging generations of Chinese American donors have generated “professional” gifts to universities and colleges. Several donors interviewed for this study were second, third, and fourth generation philanthropists. While earlier

philanthropists practiced “personal” giving to help their family and friends in the local community, more recent generations exercised professional patterns of giving to support mainstream organizations. One third-generation philanthropist recalled his grandfather practicing personal philanthropy to help Chinese and Chinese Americans in the local community, while his father practiced personal and professional giving to support his families and relatives as well as his alma mater in the U.S. After three generations, this informant practiced professional giving solely, supporting educational and cultural institutions in mainstream America.

Clearly, professional giving to mainstream organizations has become a common pattern among Chinese American major donors. Indeed, all donors interviewed for this study gave or have given tax-deductible gifts to U.S. universities and colleges. It is misleading to conclude, though, that Chinese American giving has become wholly professional. There are donors who gave personal gifts to individual students and professionals. Not only that, but Chinese American giving remains truly personal in terms of giving channels as their gifts having developed from personal connections and interests. Chinese American donors gave professional gifts to universities and colleges but gave to benefit personal connections. Thus, universities and colleges must employ personal solicitation efforts to solicit professional gifts. An important step in this process is to continuously seek and foster personal relationships with Chinese American prospects. This cultivation process begins with students and more active alumni members and gradually expands to other potential donors in the area. Additionally, institutions must rely on the expertise and knowledge of community leaders. Especially when target donors are less attached to the institution, personal introductions by these

community leaders personalizes the solicitation process. These personal solicitation strategies enable universities and colleges to identify prospects' interests and beliefs. When universities and colleges solicit professional gifts in a more personal matter, Chinese American donors would feel more inclined to support U.S. higher education.

### **Myth3: Generational Differences Exist in Chinese American Giving**

Chao's (1999) study posits generational factors in Chinese American giving, asserting that first generation immigrants give more exclusively to ethnic-specific causes in their home country as opposed to second generation and beyond who support mainstream organizations. The findings from this study have revealed contradictory views. First and foremost, immigrants' generational label is too ambiguous to explain the complexity of donor behaviors. First generation immigrants usually refer to people who immigrated to a country and more likely acquired naturalized citizenship, but also the children of immigrant parents who are the first U.S.-born in the family. This indefinite consensus creates confusing discussions around generational identities. For instance, one donor interviewed for this study considered herself as first generation because she was the first U.S. born in her family, even though her parents were the first to immigrant to the U.S. Another donor considered himself as a third generation even though he came to the U.S. by himself because both his grandfather and his father were graduates of U.S. universities. As a matter of fact, both of these individuals can be defined as "first-generation" and "second generation and beyond" depending on which one of the two definitions they employ, further complicating generational discussions in philanthropic giving.

Overall, Chinese American giving has revealed minimal generational implication. Among four former student immigrants from Taiwan who came to the U.S. for advanced graduate degrees, three supported their alma mater in their home country. Two other donors who supported mainland Chinese universities considered themselves as second and third generation. More importantly, all donors interviewed for this study gave to mainstream organizations. Clearly, the earlier statement that first-generation immigrants support personal causes in their home county and second generation and beyond immigrants give to mainstream organizations is not sufficient to explain the complexity of Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education.

Yet, it is misleading to conclude that generational factors have no effect on Chinese American giving. It was documented throughout this study that Chinese American family giving transformed from personal to professional over multiple generations. One donor mentioned that his father supported his family and friends in the community while he gives more broadly to academic programs that reflect his personal and professional interests. Another donor noted critical generational differences in terms of giving priorities; her great-grandfather gave primarily for natural disasters and poverty, while her generation gives predominantly to education and culture.

Generational implications in Chinese American giving are two-folds. On one hand, ambiguous generational labeling complicates discussions of generational factors in Chinese American giving. Even though two donors had exactly the same immigration histories, for example--the first U.S.-born children of immigrant parents from Taiwan--they can identify themselves as either first or second generation. Without a singular definition of generational labeling, it remains difficult to identify the general donor

characteristics for each of different generational groups. Indeed, the earlier argument of generational differences in Asian American giving was not comprehensive for Chinese American donors. Individuals of various generational backgrounds supported educational causes in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China. All donors of different generations supported mainstream U.S. universities and colleges. All in all, Chinese American giving destinations had little to do with individuals' generational backgrounds, but more to do with donors' personal, communal, and societal affinities. Still notable is the generational effect in family giving. Second generation and beyond philanthropists gave to mainstream organizations while first generation philanthropists gave exclusively to ethnic causes in local communities.

#### **Myth 4: Recent Increases in International Chinese Students Has Positive Impacts on Chinese American Philanthropy**

Records show that U.S. higher education accommodates close to 130,000 Chinese students each year (Open Doors Report, 2010). How does this recent trend impact Chinese American giving? Will this expansion accelerate philanthropic giving among Chinese Americans? Or will it discourage Chinese American giving in any way?

A few donors noted that this rapid growth has minimal effects on Chinese American philanthropy. First and foremost, these international Chinese students are still in the early stages of their professional development, and they have no economic capacity to make philanthropic contributions. Also, donors perceived that most of these student immigrants who originally come from mainland China tend to be self-protective because of the hardships they went through in the host country. One donor further observed that these students are mostly self-financed and receive little to no financial support from U.S.

institutions. As a result, donors perceived that international students will have little emotional obligation to give back to their alma mater even if they have enough financial capacity in the future.

Still, several donors argued a positive aspect of this growing international Chinese student population in the U.S. They argued that younger generations in general are more involved in volunteer activities, and international Chinese students are no exception. Growing numbers of international Chinese students encourage a reverse form of diaspora philanthropy, in terms of former U.S. higher education graduates giving back from their home country or regions to the U.S. These individuals include entrepreneurs who were pushed back to their home country or regions. After the economic downturn in 2000, many of them relocated their businesses to their home country or regions and became exceptionally successful. They dedicated generous sums of their fortunes to charitable causes, including educational giving to U.S. institutions. Another group of emerging philanthropists are former student immigrants in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong who send their children back to U.S. higher education institutions. Emotional attachment and gratitude for their children's education will strengthen philanthropic contributions. Another donor also noted that giving to international Chinese students indirectly benefits the Chinese American community. He believes that recipients of financial supports will return the favor by promoting positive images of Chinese descendants living in the U.S.

Overall, the increasing number of international Chinese students is not an absolute remedy to encourage Chinese American philanthropy. The findings revealed that U.S. universities and colleges must nurture institutional attachments among international

Chinese students. Currently, international Chinese students are mostly self-financed and thus possess minimal emotional attachments to their alma mater. Many of them struggle to financially meet high rates of tuition and the cost of living in the U.S. If they were to receive partial or full-scholarships from affiliated institutions, they would become extremely grateful and feel obligated to give back when the time comes. Also, universities must maintain connections with Chinese international graduates. Former student immigrants include entrepreneurs who have made incredible fortunes back in their home country or regions. Universities need to facilitate international channels to reconnect with these prospects, invite them to campus events, form local alumni functions, and persistently inform them about institutional supports for current international students. By continuously involving international Chinese students, universities will generate additional funds from untapped international Chinese American prospects.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

The combination of “traditional” and “non-traditional” perspectives on donor motivations reveals a more holistic dynamic of Chinese American donor behaviors. While cultural factors influenced donors at different levels, “traditional” donor motivations did encourage Chinese American giving to U.S. higher education. Notably, reciprocity from college experiences and community, institutional, and personal attachments consistently existed in Chinese American giving. Additionally, social responsibility, donors’ giving capacity, and personal and psychological benefits were underlying factors in Chinese American donor behaviors. In contrast, while donors’ motivations could be characterized as “traditional,” the way in which Chinese Americans donated to higher education was decidedly “non-traditional.” Donors gave to universities and colleges with absolute emphasis of Chinese traditional beliefs in education and fraternal relationships.

All in all, donations described in the study were large, institutionalized, and public, all of which characterize Western patterns of philanthropy. This is understandable because participants interviewed for this study were established Chinese Americans in the U.S.—not Chinese or Chinese overseas in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Nearly all of them cited the impact of Western culture on their giving practices or their concept of philanthropy. Many elaborated further, referencing their use of skills acquired in capitalist ventures as influencing how they donate funds. In other words, donors acquired and implemented American models of professional philanthropy. Unlike traditional Chinese gifts that support individuals, Chinese American donors

interviewed for this study gave directly to universities. Among them, several donors established nonprofit foundations to operate their charitable funds while others served on university boards, providing strategic advice and assisting with institutional fundraising efforts. Additionally, Chinese American gifts targeted donors' professional affinities. Chinese American donors supported causes that related to professional development, including their desire to target particular fields of expertise, to develop personal connections, and to retain personal involvement in a cause.

It is important to note, though, that donors interviewed for this study were dominantly major gift donors, their life-time donations ranging from \$50,000 to \$90 million. In other words, documented perspectives of “traditional” donor motivations and a notion of “large, public, and professional” Chinese American giving persisted strictly among major gift donors—excluding a whole group of people who give moderate amounts. While philanthropic behaviors of Chinese American donors who give moderate amounts requires further investigation, universities and colleges must understand this division within Chinese American donor groups and design fundraising strategies that reflect different views respectively.

As Chinese and Asian American communities continue to grow economically, additional channels for the support of emerging professional philanthropy must be created if persistent, Chinese American philanthropic cultures and communities are to develop. In contrast to supplanting existing philanthropic cultures, this process should unite traditional motivations with non-traditional donation methods and systems for the empowerment of transnational individuals and groups.

## **Suggestions for University Fundraising Targeting Chinese Americans**

How can we apply the above discussions into actual practices of university fundraising? The study reasserts the value of diversity in fundraising strategies, especially alternative strategies that target particular donor groups. For Chinese American donors specifically, universities need to explore solicitation strategies that best appeal to the historical and cultural contexts undergirding each Chinese American donor's belief in philanthropy.

### **Suggestion 1: Promoting Philanthropic Awareness Among College Students**

University fundraising must start with current students. Universities and colleges should offer courses on philanthropy and fundraising to introduce philanthropic concepts to students prior to graduation. The courses must cover historical overviews of philanthropy in American higher education, concepts of philanthropy and fundraising, alumni giving, and philanthropic practices among non-traditional minority donor groups.

Additionally, universities and colleges should require students to engage in fundraising or volunteering activities, encouraging students to “experience” and “practice” the knowledge they learned in class. For instance, development offices could recruit students to volunteer at alumni events. Meeting with development officers and alumni would help students understand the importance of maintaining alumni relationships. Additionally, such efforts will help nurture students' institutional attachment which, as previously discussed in this project, is one of the key incentives for donation to an alma mater.

For Chinese and Chinese American students specifically, universities must provide financial support and organize targeted events and activities to cultivate a sense of belonging to the campus community. Besides existing cultural events or activities organized by Chinese and Chinese American student organizations, such as Lunar New Year events, Freshman Orientations, and other social gatherings, universities and colleges should further facilitate programs in collaboration with Chinese American community organizations. For instance, community organizations and campus entities that work specifically with Chinese and Chinese American student population—e.g. Chinese Studies Department, Confucius Institutes, or Asian American Studies Program—could collaboratively form a cultural event aligning with students’ needs. Such efforts will not only facilitate students’ interactions with key actors and consequently strengthens their institutional and communal attachment, but also allows community leaders to become part of the campus community. Once again, recruiting these community leaders to university initiatives is crucial for cultivating effective fundraising strategies targeting Chinese American donors.

Beside cultural incentives, universities and colleges should promote departmental gatherings. This project revealed that not all Chinese American donors share cultural incentives. Participants emphasized that other factors such as relationships with university leaders, faculty, and students mattered more in the decision making processes. As introduced by one of the interviewees for this study, universities and colleges should develop a one-on-one mentoring program which pairs students with alumni working in a related field. Under this program, mentors are responsible for providing professional guidance to students, while students in return are obligated to share ongoing departmental

initiatives with their mentors. Such a reciprocal program will nurture alumni's institutional attachment and provide non-material opportunities to give back to their alma mater. Nevertheless, these voluntarily contributions are immeasurable because as discussed in earlier chapters, philanthropic motivation is something that develops over time. Through on-going involvements with students and departments, alumni who are willing to contribute more will make philanthropic decisions when the time comes. Even more so, such a program also influences students to reciprocate when they are in the position to do so. As donors discussed, positive college experiences drive philanthropic motivations. If students received adequate professional mentorships and they are appreciative of such experiences, they will more likely become the next generation of mentors, and then donors.

### **Suggestion 2: Organizing Alumni Events Specific to Chinese American Interests**

It is no coincidence that donors interviewed for this study supported their or their family's alma maters and those donors' perceptions of effective fundraisings focused exclusively on alumni giving. Alumni ties are clearly the primary channel of Chinese American giving. Universities and colleges should develop alumni events or activities specific to Chinese American alumni's interests. Such initiatives must have both ethnic- and non-ethnic focuses. Ethnic-specific alumni associations or organizational events and activities will appeal to Chinese American alumni who possess stronger Chinese heritage.

For instance, universities and colleges should organize a collaborative Lunar Chinese New Year event. Currently, numbers of different community organizations, student associations, and university entities all host their Lunar New Year events at

different locations. There could be an effort to combine these events into one holistic activity, where students, faculty, community leaders, university leaders, and other members of the community get together and celebrate. Universities and colleges could facilitate additional incentives, such as inviting Chinese American celebrities to speak or offering authentic Chinese food. Events like this will bring communities and universities together, all while building communal attachments among students and faculty and nurturing, trustworthy community-university relationships. Given the fact that the majority of donations documented in this study were dedicated by donors who lived close to recipient institutions, “giving” to prospects in their neighborhoods will generate future revenue.

Additionally, universities should develop non-ethnic alumni programs that reflect different professions or cultural interests of Chinese American alumni. For instance, universities could organize a symposium that gathers local artists, students in art majors, and alumni who excel in the field. Networking events or collaborative research opportunities for business professionals will connect alumni, university leadership, faculty and students. Overall, university’s “giving” efforts must appeal to Chinese American alumni and their individual interests.

### **Suggestion 3: Developing Chinese American Family-Based Scholarships**

To cultivate better and more culturally sensitive strategies, recipient institutions must identify the magnitudes of ethnic and cultural affinities of individual Chinese American donors. Donors who have stronger affinities to their Chinese American heritage are more likely to respond to ethnic-specific fundraising strategies. For instance,

one of the strategies is to develop a family-based endowment. Confucian teachings highly value filial responsibilities. Rather than soliciting individual gifts, recipient institutions could develop a family-unit endowment to allow targeted, institutional support of existing filial and fraternal relationships. Additionally, smaller, family-based endowments enable universities and colleges to better facilitate the expansion of “private and personal” Chinese American giving. This strategy, while providing structured, tiered giving support, simultaneously considers individual privacy while providing options for donors to remain anonymous or to publicize their gifts.

Connecting the philanthropic causes with donors’ personal backgrounds is also critical. Fundraising efforts should highlight how a prospect’s “friends” struggle to obtain education as well as how the organization could help that prospect provide the most support with his/her resources. While Confucianism highlights the value of education for practicing philanthropy, education helps younger generations achieve and surpass current levels of academic advancement. Higher education institutions should highlight learning opportunities for underprivileged students as areas of donation synergistic with Confucian teachings for pursuing the ways of life.

#### **Suggestion 4: Recruiting Chinese American Leaders in University Administration**

Another strategy to solicit Chinese American major gifts is visible Chinese American leadership in university administrations. This study showed that the first Chinese American leader at a public university solicited tremendous gifts from Chinese Americans. Many Chinese Americans were willing to share their wealth because he was the first Chinese American leader in U.S. higher education history. Donors who had

stronger communal involvements praised his remarkable achievement and supported his initiatives. At the same time, the fact that this official worked at one of America's top universities further strengthened donor incentives. The official was nominated and selected by the U.S. mainstream which resonates with Chinese American donors' incentives to support within the U.S. context. Learning from these actual examples, universities should recruit Chinese Americans in their leadership positions, individuals who are professionally capable and are willing to serve for the Chinese American community.

What is important here, however, is that recruiting a Chinese American leader is not the end of the story. One donor interviewed for this study mentioned the importance of continuous personal relationships with the university leadership. This continuous relationship contributed significantly toward motivations to donate repeatedly to the institution, and in greater quantities. In order to generate and support these relationships, universities and colleges must ensure their Chinese American leadership develops and fosters relationships with individual donors and Chinese American communities specifically. These existing donors and other community members need to know how the Chinese American leadership can help realize donors' philanthropic endeavors. Without leaders' continuous contributions, recruiting Chinese American leadership alone will make insufficient impacts on institutional fundraising efforts targeting Chinese American donor populations.

### **Suggestion 5: Tracking and Publicizing Alumni and Donor Ethnicity**

None of above mentioned fundraising strategies will take place without understanding ethnic backgrounds of individual donors. Universities and colleges must strive to implement more comprehensive methods for tracking donor ethnicity by building quantitative data sets to aid results-based analysis. Quantitative data would expand the interpersonal understanding of Chinese American giving and provide broader understanding of current trends and patterns of philanthropic giving by different ethnic groups. From this dataset, development officers would be able to identify the overall characteristics of giving destinations and areas of interests among Chinese American donors. Additionally, universities should encourage prominent Chinese American donors to share their experiences with other prospects. Recognizing major contributions by Chinese American donors would make students, alumni, and prospects feel further attached and connected to the institutions.

More importantly, universities and colleges must make these data sets accessible to the public. These data sets on donor ethnicity should be shared widely by university personnel, community members, and individual donors. All are key contributors to effective university fundraising and they should be able to utilize these data sets for knowledge and success in the field. Faculty or students who are doing research on philanthropy could benefit from such data sets and in return could provide findings that benefit university campuses as a whole. Individual donors who possess stronger cultural attachment may feel obligated to further promote donations by individuals from particular ethnic backgrounds. All in all, a shared tracking system of donor ethnicity will

help bring development officers, universities, and communities together in their efforts to develop fundraising strategies sensitive to donors' ethnic backgrounds.

### **Suggestion 6: Specializing Development Officers in Chinese American Philanthropy**

Developing trustworthy relationships between donors and development offices is essential to cultivating successful fundraising strategies. To that end, development offices need to encourage development officers to, instead of working with donating populations generally, specialize in Chinese American philanthropy in higher education. Specialization of staff could be further supported by recruiting more Chinese and Asian American development officers as well as development offices offering workshops or training regarding cultural sensitivity and donor behaviors that are particularly unique to Chinese American donors. As mentioned in the previous chapters, sophisticated Chinese American donors do not necessarily perceive ethnic/racial background of development officers as their primary credential. It is rather their understanding of cultural nuances and whether the person is capable of integrating cultural sensitivity with existing professional fundraising skills. In order to do so, development offices may be able to utilize institutional support to employ graduate assistants who could help collect and further knowledge about Chinese and Asian American giving to higher education.

Additionally, universities and colleges should invite Chinese development officers who are working in mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong to attend their professional development workshops. Philanthropy is still a growing field in Chinese university development, and thus development officers will benefit tremendously from such professional experiences. In contrast, American development officers, through

sharing their experiences, will develop professional relationships that help them understand Chinese culture and traditions. Such personal interactions are by far the best way to understand sensitive cultural nuances persistent within Chinese American donor relations.

These are only selective pathways to building a professional bridge to promote cultural understandings among practitioners. By supporting the professional development of graduate students and international fundraisers within the practice-base contexts of development offices, fundraisers working at U.S. universities and colleges would benefit, exchanging knowledge of fundraising practices while gaining valuable data regarding cultural sensitivities.

### **Suggestion 7: Recruiting Chinese American Leaders in “Asking” for Donations**

The findings from this study supported the impact of involving Chinese American leaders in solicitation processes. Universities and colleges should identify prominent Chinese American leaders in the community, business corporations, and politics who have knowledge, cultural understanding, and more importantly the personal ties with high-profile individuals. These are individuals who know who to ask, how to ask, and what to ask. Recruiting these individuals in fundraising will increase effectiveness and efficiency when approaching Chinese American donors. A single visit by these individuals is far more effective than multiple visits by individuals who have no affiliation with prospects’ professional or communal ties. As one donor mentioned, these individuals know how to “wine, dine, and then when to ask” (Personal Communication, May 13, 2010). Especially since direct asking is considered disrespectful and there is no

right timing to ask, universities should depend on these “experts” to ask in the most sensitive way as possible.

In order to involve Chinese American community leaders, universities and colleges must facilitate on-campus events that appeal to these leaders’ interests. In addition to Lunar New Year events and other social gatherings listed above, institutions must develop additional efforts to maintain personal relationships with these community leaders. Inviting them to campus-organized events is only the start of their relationship; institutional “giving” processes need to persist until these leaders feel obligated to give back. After all, developing reliable relationships with community leaders and engaging them into fundraising strategies is one of the effective ways to promote Chinese American donations, especially among those who have stronger communal obligations.

### **Suggestion 8: Providing Workshops on Fundraising and Philanthropy for “Moderate” Gift Prospects**

Findings from this research revealed a category of Chinese American donors who give “moderate” amounts through “personal and private” channels. The presence of this group reasserts that universities and colleges must address the needs of this population, and incorporate fundraising strategies that speak specifically to moderate gift donors.

Such efforts start by identifying and reconnecting with these individuals. Unlike major gift donors, these moderate gift prospects tend to remain publicly invisible. As a result, they may be active members in community organizations, but their voluntary contributions are neglected by university development offices because they have not previously dedicated sizable gifts. However, institutions must remember that these individuals are ones who sincerely care about community advancement and ones who

devote their personal hours toward creating better environment for future generations. Engaging these groups in university fundraising would generate immeasurable asset to universities. Although individual contributions may be small, collective contributions by these individuals can help develop programs that satisfy needs of students and communities as a whole.

To do so, universities and colleges must specify needs and efficacy of individual gifts. As discussed in earlier sections, donors are concerned about how their gifts help others and how their money is spent. In addition to involving these individuals with campus activities and illustrating their possible contributions, recipient institutions should offer complementary workshops or training sessions covering know-hows of fundraising. These informative sessions will help donors learn skills and knowledge necessary to make the most out of their affordable gifts through the “private and personal” channels with which they feel most comfortable. Overall, universities and colleges should place more attention on these moderate gift prospects who have enormous potential to dedicate small but long-lasting gifts for the benefit of university communities.

### **Suggestion 9: Promoting Internationalization of University Fundraising**

Many donors throughout the study described the emerging trend of global philanthropy, giving to and from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Donors noted a minimal impact from increasing international Chinese students because of weak institutional ties. One donor observed that most of these students self-finance their education in the U.S. and thus feel little obligation to give back to their alma mater. What this implies is the need for additional institutional supports for international students

during college. If students received full or even partial scholarships from their affiliated institutions, they are more likely to reciprocate the favor later in their life.

Providing financial support is only one way of promoting institutional ties with international Chinese students. Universities and colleges must continue promoting curriculum and programs that respond to educational needs of these student populations. For instance, institutions should provide one-on-one English tutoring programs for limited English proficiency students. Chinese students could be individually paired with English-native students who have common academic or personal interests. This program affiliation should last at least a year. Through continuing personal relationships, mentors will not only provide adequate academic supports, but they can also help Chinese international students adjust into American culture. This will also promote internationalization of university campuses by increasing awareness among American students about the difficulties of international students studying in the U.S. More importantly, such programs facilitate positive college experiences among Chinese international students which are essential motivators of future philanthropic contributions.

Additionally, several donors noted that a number of former international Chinese graduates are giving back to higher education institutions in the U.S. Universities need to launch international alumni associations to maintain connections with these graduates and to accommodate international donations. Development officers specializing in international fundraising need to make personal visits to meet with core members of the alumni groups in different countries. Another finding from this study showed that Chinese American giving benefited institutions in closer proximity to their residence. Soliciting international giving contradicts with this finding. Thus, developing

trustworthy personal connections becomes particularly crucial. If alumni meet development officers in person and become part of the international alumni community, graduates will feel more obligated to support their alma mater overseas.

### **Suggestion 10: Encouraging Collaborative Efforts Between Practitioners and Scholars**

My previous study indicated that development offices have not effectively employed previous research findings into actual fundraising activities (Tsunoda, 2010). This is understandable given that hardly any study has synthesized the field of Asian American giving from the more commonly studied fields of diversity in university fundraising and donor motivation. As mentioned earlier, significant amounts of research have highlighted current trends of diversity agendas in fundraising. Similarly, many studies, particularly ones around the issues of alumni giving, have focused on donor motivations. Because there is a lack of consolidated information available and accessible to development officers, there is an understandable gap in research knowledge and fundraising practice.

Compiling aspects of relevant research from multiple disciplines requires tremendous investments of time and effort, discouraging or preventing development officers' work to assemble this body of work independently. This also establishes critical gaps between practitioners and researchers. If the research findings are not effectively applied into actual development activities, what is the significance of conducting research in fundraising and philanthropy? The current research has tangentially approached aspects of Chinese American giving behaviors as they have pertained to studies of fundraising and philanthropy. All in all, synthesizing the components of research

findings and utilizing them to construct specific practices to solicit Chinese American giving to higher education is crucial for the development of this type of philanthropy. This requires not only independent efforts by higher education research and personnel but collaborative efforts between practitioners and academic researchers.

### **Limitations and Implications for Future Research**

While this study untangled the complexity of Chinese American giving behaviors, this research has limitations. Obviously, the sample size is insufficient to provide broader understandings of current trends and patterns of philanthropic giving by Chinese Americans. The findings are strictly true to individuals studied for this research and hardly remain generalizable. Also, a concern for confidentiality prevented the closer investigation of connections between donors' profiles and their philanthropic behaviors. Furthermore, this study limited its samples to second generation and beyond Chinese Americans and first generation student immigrants, omitting observations from pre-1949 first generation Chinese Americans and more recent post-1980 immigrants. Nevertheless, these limitations are somewhat uncontrollable. Universities rarely track donors by ethnicity, and institutions that do so are hesitant to share information with outsider staff and researchers. As a result, identification of participants continues to be incredibly challenging.

Considering these methodological challenges, the information presented in this study is rich and beneficial for universities and for the Chinese American community as a whole. First and foremost, universities should reassess current fundraising efforts and implement additional strategies that reflect Chinese Americans' cultural uniqueness

regarding philanthropy. Chinese American giving is no longer exclusively “small, personal, and private” (Koehn and Yin, 2002). Rather, donors are willing to speak out and have generated incredible contributions to mainstream higher educational institutions.

In closing, further research must put together the pieces of previous studies into coherent impressions of Chinese diaspora giving to U.S. higher education for the benefit of researchers, fundraising professionals, transnational Chinese American populations, and American higher education in general. Findings of this research reveal a diversion of philanthropic behaviors between Chinese American major and “moderate” gift donors. Large, professional, and public patterns of giving characterized by Chinese American major donors interviewed for this study bear little resemblance to giving patterns of those who give smaller amounts. Further investigation of philanthropic behaviors, specifically among Chinese American “moderate” gift donors, will help disclose diversity within this donor group, if holistic and effective university fundraising strategies are to develop. Additionally, Chinese American donors’ perceptions regarding the positive impact of the growing number of international students in U.S. higher education on Chinese American philanthropy requires further empirical investigations. Future research needs to incorporate cases of philanthropic giving by international Chinese graduates of U.S. institutions. Understanding the transnational dynamics of giving practices between the U.S. and mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong will broaden the scope of Chinese American fundraising strategies. Also, learning from the perspectives of sub-ethnic Asian American donors will further enrich the practices of Asian American giving to U.S. higher education. Ultimately, the only way to gather conclusive knowledge and information about Chinese and Asian American philanthropy in U. S. higher education is

investigating the shifting Asian transnational identity as it impacts the engagement of Asian and Asian Americans with educational philanthropy.

## Appendix A: Chinese American Donor Interview Protocols

Q1. Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Q2. How did you learn about charitable giving?

Q3. Aside from giving to U.S. higher education, have you ever donated to other charitable causes?

Q4. How did you support U.S. higher education?

Q5. Why did you decide to support higher education specifically?

Q6. How do you think Chinese heritage influenced your decision?

Q7. How did you establish your relationship with the university?

Q8. Could you share a memorable story from the solicitation process?

Q9. Could you tell me about what happened after you made the gift?

Q10. Do you think charitable giving is encouraged in your culture?

Q11. Some people say that Chinese American giving is small, personal, and private. What would you say to them?

Q12. How do you think the recent expansion of Chinese student immigration will affect Chinese American philanthropy?

Q13. How do you think universities can better respond to the changing demographics of Chinese American donors?

## Appendix B: Chinese American Donor Interview Request Letter

Greetings,

I am writing to you today to ask for your participation in a dissertation research project that I am developing for completion of my Doctorate degree in Education.

My name is Kozue Tsunoda, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Maryland specializing in International Education Policy. As a Japanese academic researcher, my focus over the past several years has been the study of Chinese American philanthropy. I spent five years in Singapore, majored Chinese in college, and studied a year in Guangzhou, China. Throughout my life, I have spent considerable time working with Chinese citizens, Chinese Americans, and Chinese American philanthropic organizations and leaders, and have presented my findings at several international conferences.

The purpose of my dissertation research is to understand philanthropic motivations behind Chinese American giving to American higher education. I am interviewing Chinese American donors who have supported American higher education to answer the following fundamental question:

*Why and how do Chinese Americans donate to American higher education?*

With my thanks to [NAME], I have learned about your remarkable philanthropic contributions in American higher education. If it is possible, I would love to invite you to participate in this study. The individual interview would require approximately an hour of your time, and I would be happy to conduct the interview at whatever location would be most convenient for you. There is nothing special that you need to prepare for the interviews, although letters, photographs, and other items that will inspire your story would be very helpful. I will be collecting data until the end of July. If this is not convenient, I am happy to accommodate your scheduling needs.

No scholarly research has ever highlighted charitable behaviors of Chinese American donors in American higher education. I believe that your participation in this study would be of tremendous value, both to other donors and institutions as well as to the Chinese and Asian American communities.

Attached is a consent form that explains the project in more detail and advises you of the risks and benefits of this project. If you need more information, feel free to contact me by [EMAIL] or by telephone at [NUMBER].

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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