

## “The Quality Gap” Funding Challenges in Higher Education

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In 1993 the Utah State Board of Regents gave approval to Utah Valley Community College to begin offering baccalaureate degrees and to change its name to Utah Valley State College. In 1994 the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges granted full accreditation for all programs offered by the College, including the baccalaureate degrees.

Such authorizations and approvals set in motion a series of academic and administrative changes that have transformed the institution. One of the most critical considerations facing the College is its source of funding. If Utah Valley State College is going to achieve the level of academic excellence that students seek and that a four-year institution should provide, state funding alone will not be sufficient.

At the present time UVSC educates 15 percent of the students in the Utah System of Higher Education with only 8.4 percent of the state funds allocated. This disparity has created what can be called a “Quality Gap.” Where will the additional funding come from to provide the quality of education our students deserve? One answer to this question is funding from private sources.

Even though UVSC is not the first to face this funding challenge, it is unique in that the change from a community college to a four-year institution took place “overnight.” Particularly affected was the School of Business, which went from offering two-year associate degrees to offering the first baccalaureate degrees at the College within the space of one year.

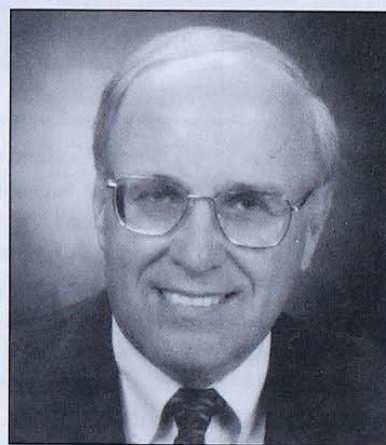
In an effort to raise private funds, the School of Business established an external relations program designed to improve and advance its academic programs. The vision of external relations is to develop a variety of activities and programs which are (1) **attractive** to students, faculty, and the public; (2) **worthwhile** in advancing academic excellence; (3) **achievable** within the constraints of funds and staff; and (4) **widely shared** in the School and throughout the College.

External relations activities are conducted in a manner to involve people in the educational processes of the School so that additional resources accrue. Some of the activities included in this program are the following:

1. Creating an advisory council comprised of influential business people from the Western United States. One important role of this council is fund raising.
2. Establishing a seven-year development plan.

3. Hiring a School development officer.
4. Commissioning fund raising brochures and supporting materials.
5. Soliciting funds from the Utah business community.
6. Forming a School of Business Alumni Board to build a database of business alumni and solicit financial support.
7. Developing an Executive Lecture Series.
8. Building a student-mentor program.
9. Producing a School of Business academic journal for the publication of scholarly work.
10. Conducting a major donor campaign that establishes four professorships and numerous scholarships.

These activities are designed to enable those who participate to better understand the School of Business, its mission, faculty, students, and curriculum—as well as its needs. The ultimate aim of such involvement is to develop supporters who help serve the students and *narrow the quality gap.*



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