

On March 16, 2022, TIFF Investment Management hosted the second of four sessions in our Fundraising Symposium. Each session has its own theme and set of presenters, but the purpose of all is the same: To help nonprofits leverage fundraising best practices efficiently and effectively in a post-pandemic landscape.

“Diversifying Your Donor Base” was hosted by **Dr. Robert T. Grimm, Jr.**, the Levenson Family Chair in Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership in the School of Public Policy and Founding Director of the Do Good Institute at the University of Maryland. **Ebonie J. Cooper-Jean**, Principal of Friends of Ebonie, LLC, and Executive Director and Founder of the Young, Black & Giving Back Institute (YBGB), led an interactive presentation on changing our definition of generosity, unraveling stereotypes around people of color and giving, and engaging with different communities of color.

TIFF Members can access the recording of the session and presentation materials through the Member portal. A high-level summary of this exciting event appears below.

If you have questions or feedback or would like to receive an invitation to the remaining sessions in our 2022 Fundraising Symposium, please send an email with your name, affiliation, and title to memberservices@tiff.org.

TIFF 2022 Fundraising Symposium Session 2 of 4: “Diversifying Your Donor Base”

Host: Dr. Robert (“Bob”) T. Grimm
Director, Do Good Institute, University of Maryland
[DGI | UMD School of Public Policy](#)

Speaker: Ebonie J. Cooper-Jean
Principal of Friends of Ebonie, LLC
Executive Director and Founder of the Young, Black & Giving Back Institute
[Friends of Ebonie](#)

Changing Our Definition of Generosity

When people think of philanthropy, they default to three things: old, white, and wealthy. It is time to change this image and create an equal playing field for people to give and feel valued when giving. This is done through broadening views on giving. Think beyond ticket size to how people approach giving.

In 1912, Madam C.J. Walker, the first female, self-made millionaire in the United States and an African American woman, was described as the “unfolding woman.” She grew when approached with the prospect of giving. Generosity and giving is all about the heart of the giver. The objective should be to appreciate all giving and understand generosity in this spirit.

Myths and Facts About Giving in Communities of Color

“Communities of color have always organized to take care of their own, and in that respect, identity-based philanthropy is neither a new field or practice” (2012 W.K. Kellogg *Culture of Giving Report*)

There are many myths surrounding giving practices in communities of color. For example, the myth exists that Hispanic immigrants tend not to be charitable. In truth, the longer that Hispanic immigrants stay in the US, the more strongly their giving correlates to that of the broader population. Similarly, there is a mistaken belief that African Americans are mostly new donors. In fact, African Americans have a strong legacy of giving, contributing 25% *more* of their income per year than white Americans.

In addition to a higher rate of giving per households, communities of color have a high rate of giving across households. Two thirds of Black and Hispanic households and nearly half of Asian households donate to charity in a given year. Giving, however, can look different in communities of color. They may engage in informal giving or other methods not fully captured in existing data. Each group has their own unique story and challenges that shape how they engage in giving.

Some of these myths are likely perpetuated by the fact that nonprofit development staff tends to engage white donors more than they do donors of color. This may cause many to overlook the generosity found in communities of color.

Community-Centric Fundraising

Engaging communities of color is not just about bringing in new donors. It is also about making diversity and diverse giving part of the fabric of your organization. An effective way to do this is through a model of community-centric fundraising, an approach created by a group organizers in Seattle

“Community-centric fundraising is a fundraising model that is grounded in equity and social justice. We prioritize the entire community over individual organizations, foster a sense of belonging and interdependence, present our work not as individual transactions but holistically, and encourage mutual support between nonprofits.”
(<https://communitycentricfundraising.org/>).

The model is centered on the following principles:

1. Centers the community not the donor
2. Eradicates the “White Savior” complex
3. Considers
 - a. Word choices
 - b. Feelings and imagery
 - c. Long-term community impact
4. Empowers the community
5. Moves from “you” to “we”

How to Start Engaging Communities of Color

1. Take Inventory of your donors
2. Meet diverse donors where they are
3. Invite partnership
4. Welcome diversity in board leadership

This last point around leadership is particularly important. The board is the highest power in an

organization, but it often doesn't reflect the community which it serves. Having a diverse board, along with diverse development officers and staff, allows for a deeper level of communication. A diverse board shows that diversity is ingrained into the fabric of your organization. This demonstrates action and accountability to the communities an organization serves.

Biographies

Dr. Robert T. Grimm Jr.

Bob Grimm serves as the Levenson Family Chair in Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership in the School of Public Policy (SPP) and the founding Director of the Do Good Institute at the University of Maryland (UMD). Dr. Grimm works with an incredible team that empowers individuals to do good. The University of Maryland Board of Regents awarded Grimm their 2021 Regents Award for Faculty Excellence in Public Service for Do Good's impact. The Network of Schools of Public Policy, Public Affairs, and Public Administration (NASPAA) similarly recognized Do Good with its inaugural Voinovich Public Innovation Prize.

Started with two courses (2010) and a Do Good Challenge prize competition (2012), thousands of students participate annually in Do Good Campus programs and courses today while changing the world for good. For example, Do Good students enable thousands of families to stay safe and avoid hunger during the pandemic, change mental health accessibility and female menstrual product accessibility on campus, recycle and supply medications to tens of thousands, reduce water pollution, and eliminate over a hundred million pounds of food waste. Grimm served as the Founding Board Chair of the Food Recovery Network, which UMD students built into a national nonprofit and then launched two successful companies, Hungry Harvest and Imperfect Foods. A new building for SPP and the Institute opens in 2022 with a Do Good Hall of Fame and Do Good Plaza that features inspiring UMD efforts.

Grimm's research on philanthropy, volunteering, nonprofits, and civic engagement has been featured in The Washington Post, New York Times, MSNBC, Fast Company, and Bloomberg. Grimm co-authored a widely-cited article on "The New Volunteer Workforce" in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, articles in Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly, and the Journal of Policy Analysis & Management, and a book on American philanthropists. Invited to testify at the first hearing of the National Commission on Military, National and Public Service, the Congressional Commission focused on the Institute's research on the decline of charitable behaviors.

Grimm served as Senior Counselor to the CEO and the Director of Research & Policy Development at AmeriCorps, which annually invests approximately one billion dollars in innovative nonprofits. Grimm received senior appointments from both President Bush and President Obama's administrations and co-lead the creation of President Obama's Social Innovation Fund. Grimm expanded AmeriCorps's annual research funds from \$2 million to \$10.5 million and developed the first social capital and civic data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. Grimm earned his Ph.D. from Indiana University. Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy awarded him its 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award. An Iowa native, Bob and wife Laura have one daughter named Astrid.

Ebonie J. Cooper-Jean

Ebonie J. Cooper-Jean believes black giving is magic! A trusted consultant and social entrepreneur, Ebonie is the Principal of Friends of Ebonie, LLC, and Executive Director + Founder of the Young, Black & Giving Back Institute (YBGB). For the past decade, Ebonie has used her

research, thought-leadership, and expertise to inform national and local projects and speaking engagements related to nonprofit DEI, African American donor engagement, church ministry, partnership development, and fundraising strategies. In 2013 Ebonie released the groundbreaking research as an NYU scholar entitled: African American Millennials: Discovering the Next Generation of Black Philanthropy for the Effective Communication of Non-Profit Organizations. Findings from his report inform her career pedagogy: Engage, Enrich, & Empower.

Strategic partnerships have included the Lilly Endowment, Wells Fargo Advisors, IU Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Central Carolina Community Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, Board Source, Teach for America, United Way of the National Capital Area and unum.

Ebonie is also immersed in her passion for education and teaching. Having taught and lectured at the Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies, Trinity University, and Johns Hopkins' Social Innovation Lab, Ebonie currently serves as an adjunct faculty member in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland. Ebonie also fulfills her passion for teaching through preaching and her call to ministry. She is currently on the ordination track within the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Ebonie was recognized by ESSENCE Magazine and JET Magazine, in November 2016 and September 2013, respectively, as one of the nation's top leaders for her innovation around African - American millennial philanthropy. Ebonie's leadership and achievements have also been featured on WABC Eyewitness News NY, CNN's HLN network, The Washington Post, and Huffington Post Impact. She is a National Museum of African American History & Culture Ambassador, and a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Black Benefactors Giving Circle (DC) and Reid Temple AME Church. Ebonie is a proud graduate of North Carolina A&T State University (BS), New York University (MS) and Wesley Theological Seminary (M.Div.)