

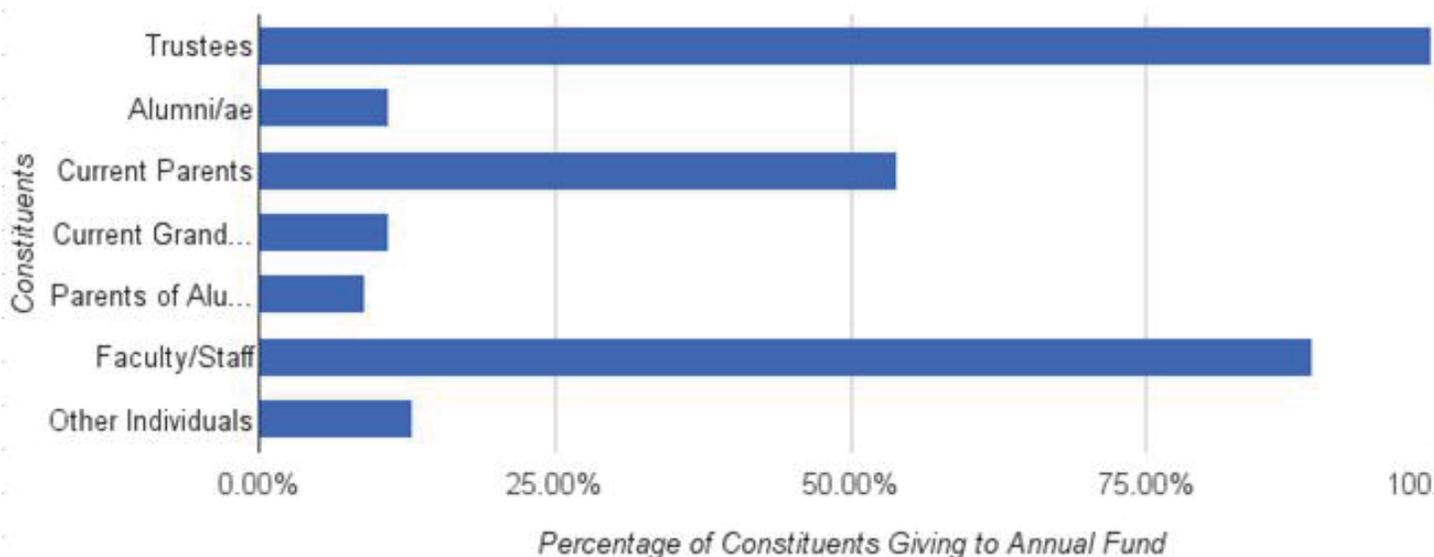
FAST FACTS

NOVEMBER 2011

“Who are the main contributors to a school’s annual fund?”

A brief overview of how independent schools are funded: Generally, 70 to 90 percent of school funding comes from tuition dollars. The rest comes from a combination of annual fundraising, investment income, and auxiliary programs (camps, bookstore, food services, rentals, etc.). In years when the school is engaged in building or preparing to build, capital campaigns are launched to raise money for these special projects.

Percentage of Participation in the Annual Fund for SAIS School Constituents from 2009-2011



It's the height of fundraising season and in this FAST FACTS, we take a look at Annual Fund giving. Specifically, the percentages that various constituents in SAIS schools give to the Annual Fund. The bar chart lists the various constituents and their mean percentage of giving over the last three years, with over 200 SAIS schools of all types reporting data. Notice that trustees in SAIS schools give at almost 100% and faculty/staff give at almost 90%. Economically and politically every headmaster knows that it is important that both these numbers are high.

It is with the remaining constituents that there seems to be room to improve. This is especially the case with current parents. The three-year average for SAIS school is about 57 percent. As with trustees and faculty, the political and economic value of having a higher percentage current parent population contribute the annual fund is clear. So how do you get there? The simple answer is: Pay more attention to it. I have worked on this at Tuscaloosa Academy, and we increased current parent participation by 20 percent by setting formal class competitions. To be fair, I must state that we had let our participation levels drop to very low levels so it was easier to increase that 20 percent. But the moral of the story is, like with obtaining good response percentages to surveys, to be structured and persistent. Every school must have at least two follow-ups to the initial ask, and these follow-ups should have a personal touch. The schools with current parent participation in the 70 percent range all have very organized and thorough processes. For the remaining constituents, it's unrealistic to expect participation rates as high as with current parents but the numbers indicated on the chart could be improved through better processes.

-Dr. Jeffrey Mitchell, Headmaster

Tuscaloosa Academy



FAST FACTS provides SAIS members with fast, readable, and pertinent information based on the quantitative analysis of one important question.

FAST FACTS encourages members to submit questions for future issues. If you have questions you would like answered via FAST FACTS please send to angela@sais.org.

All good
RESEARCH
starts with a good
QUESTION.