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from the Carolina desk of
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One Small Step...

I confess: I like lists. Short lists where each point starts with an action word and ends with an action that seems, well, doable.

So when I recently read a post by Dan Rockwell, whose **website** has a great tagline “Leadership Freak: empowering leaders 300 words at a time,” I felt it was worth sharing:

7 ways to challenge yourself today.

1. **Avoid doing things that matter less.**
2. **Build new relationships.**
3. **Strengthen current relationships.**
4. **Practice a relevant skill (listening, planning, coaching).**
5. **Participate more in meetings.**
6. **Bring up an issue you’ve been avoiding.**
7. **Say no.**

I see lots of ways to put this list to work in advancement:

First, look at what you did last week, note what didn’t really accomplish anything, and resolve not to do it again for at least two weeks.

Second, do something instead to build a stronger personal relationship: call a donor, talk with a colleague at another organization, or, best of all, reach out to someone who benefits from your organization’s good work.

Third, tackle some subject you’ve been avoiding: helping a staff member who’s hit a productivity slump or hearing out a board member or donor who has been critical of a recent decision. If it’s keeping you awake at night, then resolve to deal with it the very next day.

As Rockwell sums it up: **“Set short-term wins. Long-term goals can paralyze. Short-term wins lend themselves to taking action today.”**

Here’s to more short-term wins that will have long-term impact — for all of us!

Alumni Client Partner News

West Virginia University (WVU) has announced a gift of \$20 million over 10 years from longtime supporters **Ken and Randy Kendrick** in support of the *John Chambers College of Business and Economics*. The gift was made through the WVU Foundation. *PND, 3-3*

The University of Central Florida (UCF) will receive \$5 million from **Alan H. Ginsburg and the Ginsburg Family Foundation** to establish a center focused on fostering inclusion, building cross-cultural and global competencies, and serving the Orlando community. *PND, 2-28*

Louisiana State University received commitments totaling \$245 million over 10 years from **Our Lady of the Lake and LCMC Health** to help transform health care in the state. *PND, 2-4*

VSE Reports Giving Up FY21

Gifts to colleges and universities in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2021, totaled \$52.9 billion, a 6.9% increase from \$49.5 billion the previous year. The annual **Voluntary Support of Education** report key findings: foundations accounted for the largest share (33.1%) of dollars raised, followed by alumni (23.2%), non-alumni individuals (16.6%), other organizations (13.9%), and corporations (13.2%). Giving by alumni increased 10.8% on a year-over-year basis, while contributions from other organizations—which include donor-advised funds—grew 9.1% and foundation funding rose 6.4%. By contrast, in FY20 contributions from both foundations and alumni had been down from the previous year. [More here.](#)

FY21 Endowment Returns Rose Sharply

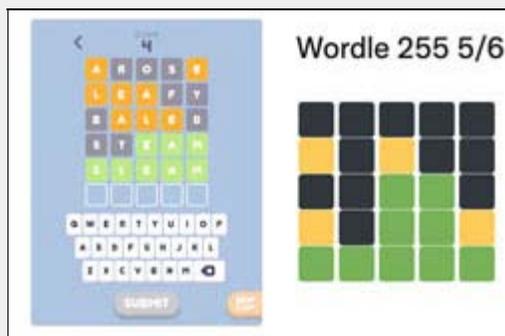
College and university endowments posted dramatically higher investment returns, asset values, and giving levels in FY21 compared with fiscal year 2020. A report from the **National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO)** and **TIAA** reports the average size of endowments in FY21 was \$1.1 billion, up 35% from FY20, with the median endowment at about \$200 million. The study also found that for the 12 months ending June 30, 2021, endowments generated an overall average return of 30.6% (net of fees), up sharply from a 1.8% overall average return in FY20. All endowment size cohorts saw returns greater than 20% for FY21, though the return gap between the largest endowments (more than \$1 billion in assets) and the smallest (\$25 million or less) was more than 13 percentage points. [More here.](#)

When 2 Wordles Collide A Nonprofit Wins

Six years ago, Steven Cravotta was an 18-year-old who developed an app, a game called Wordle!, uploaded it and waited. He originally thought the project was a bust; its average daily download rate was in the single digits. Then last December he checked the app’s stats and noticed it had 500,000 downloads in a span of five days. He realized a slew of people looking for the viral, web-only game “Wordle,” created by Josh Wardle, were mistakenly downloading his app instead.

Cravotta’s Wordle! has since become the No. 1 game in the App Store in eight countries (8 million downloads and counting), and the now 24-year-old is cashing in on that success for a good cause. With Wardle’s blessing, Cravotta will donate \$50,000 to Boost! West Oakland. Boost! provides free tutoring and mentorship for children in Oakland, CA — the city where Wardle, used to be based. As both games centered on word puzzles, Cravotta felt the money should go to a literacy-focused nonprofit. Wardle agreed.

Do yourself a favor, and read the whole story. Washington Post, 2-22



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