

Minutes
Saint John's Arboretum Advisory Council
Friday, December 4, 2009, 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
Saint John's Abbey Guesthouse

Present: Terri Barreiro, Bruce Dickau, Greg Miller, Glenn Miller, Tom Haeg, Scott Daninger, Bob Russell, Ashley Ver Burg, Jon Ruis, Andy Elton, Rosalie Leiner, Sarah Gainey, Tom Kroll, Jenny Kutter

Fr. Greg opened the meeting with a prayer and meditation.

Arboretum Membership

Thank you to Jon Ruis from SJU Institutional Advancement and Alumni Giving for joining the morning discussion.

As a group, we listed places/organizations where we hold memberships to help frame the discussion on *why* people become paying members of an organization.

Why be a member?

- Duty
- Passion
- Community
- Financial benefit (discounts, etc)
- Information/Education
- Collaboration
- Personal benefit (networking, meaning/significance)
- Free stuff

Driving Factors

- Students already pay an activity fee, the Arboretum is one of the only organizations that charges beyond that.
- Charity vs. membership
- Personality driven
- Mission driven
- Jon Ruis says he'd divide donors into three main categories:
 - o "List" people—competition driven, want to see their name on a donor list and compare/compete with others.
 - o "Support" people—support projects, mission, etc.
 - o "because I was asked" people—give when asked, didn't know they could make a difference

Average fundraising for non-profits:

- 60-70% annual renewal of donation
- Given 2 years in a row—80% renewing

- Given 3 years in a row—85% renewing
- Given 4 years in a row—90% renewing
- Arboretum currently has 82 members who have given 4 years in a row

Makes it important to connect with 1st time givers to ensure they give in the 2nd year.

- Make receipt, thank-you letters explicit that it is an ANNUAL membership
- Send a special thank you immediately, include small thank you “prize”
 - o NOTE: Jenny does send special new member thank-you packets including a letter, current/back issues of Sag Seasons, trail map, annual report, Arboretum cards

See attached graphs for current membership analysis:

- Membership by Zip Code graph: 20% of membership not represented on graph—that 20% includes isolated individuals in cities/towns across MN
 - o 75% of current membership is within 20 miles of Saint John's
- Percent of Total Donations by Donation Range
 - o Almost 50% of our funding comes from 6 donors in the \$1000-\$5000+ range
 - o General non-profit rule: 80% of revenue comes from 20% of donors
 - o Work to identify member “leaders” at each donation level—people that are likely to be long-term donors, will help sustain membership base.
- Donation Summary FY07-FY09
 - o Number of donors at each donation level is pretty consistent from year to year.
 - o SUCCESS: Number of donors and total donations has stayed level over the last 3 years. Most non-profits are currently seeing significant decreases!
- Membership Numbers, Member Donations, Average Gift per Member
 - o Data to review again from June AAC meeting

See three main types of Arboretum donors:

1. Local community members: work on message to entice and keep local interested people
 - a. Can help pull in new members: neighbors, friends, etc—personal connection/invitation
 - b. Get strong community/personal benefit from membership
2. Long-distance members: keep in contact, keep connected over the distance
 - a. These donors have the passion and collaboration benefits—strong bond that holds over the distance
3. Students: most volatile, transient population, often only give once
 - a. Work on message to students—use student leaders to initiate programs, events, connections with students and other student-led organizations
 - b. Request funds from senates for student events?
 - c. Student letters to editor of the Record (student newspaper)—NOTE: the Arboretum already places ads in every other issue of the Record.
 - d. Phone calls, personal dialog
 - e. Start an Arboretum club (tried once and was denied, perhaps could try again?)

SUMMARY

- Find 10+ member leaders (council members?) to make phone calls, talk to neighbors etc.

- We have a list of 135 donors who gave in either 07 or 08, but did not give in 09
 - Make a personal connection by having somebody they know/respect make the calls
 - Reach the “because I was asked” donors who might not realize the difference their support makes
- We don't ask enough. Need to have a clear suggested donation, i.e. \$100
 - Ask should be enough to spur a memory in the donor. Donors are more likely to remember giving a \$150 gift the previous year than a \$10 or \$20 gift
- What do we need to do and say to distinguish leaders in giving?
 - Make the message explicit on membership forms and other documents
- **Membership committee is charged with developing new strategies to reach the different types of donors and improve our asking message based on these conversations.**

Chair Nominations/Election

- Terri Barreiro has served 1 year as chair and has agreed to a 2nd year (strongly believes in 2 year terms for chair)
- Bruce moved and Greg seconded Terri's nomination. All in favor.
- Terri will remain as chair for another year.

AAC Members (see attached committee list)

- Currently have 4 vacancies on the Arboretum Advisory Council
- Thank you to both Bruce Dickau and Chuck Wocken for their years of service. They will not be renewing their terms on the council.
- Thank you also to Alison Binsfeld for all of her years on the council. She has resigned from the council due to changes in work/family.
- Abbott will appoint another Abbey representative to replace Fr. Jim Tingerthal
- What are our current needs on the council moving forward?
 - More CSB/SJU faculty representation?
 - PR/Communications
 - Local member leaders/neighbors?
 - Informal education?
 - Representative from the Prep school?
- Tom will pursue various recommendations from the council, Abbott, and SJU president before the next meeting

Committee Reports

- Fundraising:
 - Bus update: more than 15 buses have been funded at nearly \$2500 by members and friends!
 - The goal is 44 buses by the end of June, or \$7000.
 - All the raffle proceeds at this year's Open House will be dedicated to the bus fund.
 - Should try to do a year-end ask. Can we put bus slips in the newsletter?
 - Jenny will work on getting this done.

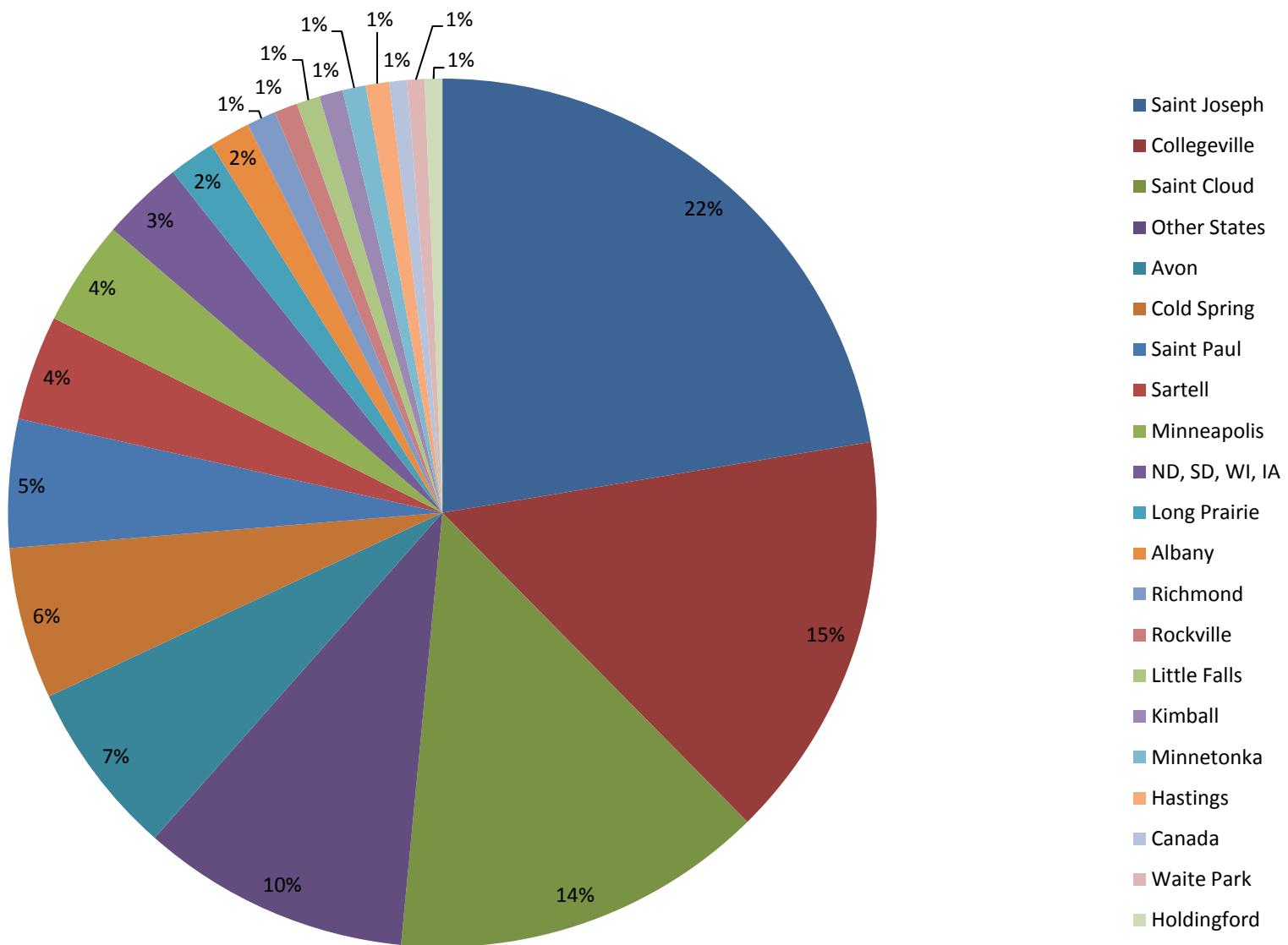
- Grants:
 - Received \$27,275 from the Morgan Family Foundation to support one year of an EE fellowship and bussing for the Saint Cloud school district
 - Final paperwork is complete on the Kathmann Endowment to the Arboretum and Pottery in support of student employees, fellowships, envr research, etc.
 - Submitted a grant to the Sea World Busch Gardens Conservation Fund for \$6450 in bus funding. Will hear from them later this spring.
- Identity:
 - Committee met in late October with representatives from the Env Studies department and President's office. The goal is to try and create an "obvious" place that identifies the Arboretum and other environmental groups and programs on campus.
 - That "place" is as yet undefined, but the idea has been included as a footnote in the Master Plan
 - The committee has had conversations with the President, Provost, and Institutional Advancement to update them on the work of the committee and the identified needs
 - If there is a donor to fund the project, it can quickly go to the front of the list, otherwise it would be 5-7 years out.
- Abbey/University Relations
 - Abbey and University are in the process of separating into two different corporations
 - Arboretum is hard to separate because of the big overlap, but in general it looks like:
 - Land issues: Abbey
 - Education: University
 - The land is integral to the Abbey and it's trying to ensure continued control into the future
 - Lease inner campus to University?
 - Annual licenses to users of the land (i.e. Arboretum, ROTC, etc)
 - Could potentially somehow mesh or combine the two lands committees
 - Arb lands committee has no decision-making power, can only recommend anyway
 - It's still uncertain what the final changes will look like or what kind of effect they may or may not have on day-to-day operations.
- Education
 - Project Earth event: collaborated with Resource Training & Solutions to host a full-day outdoor ed event for 200 middle school students.
 - Despite cold weather, it was a huge success we hope to repeat in future years
 - October weather was cold and wet!
 - Fall field trips were down 700 kids
 - Cold weather early in October perhaps kept teachers from scheduling—didn't have near as many requests as usual
 - Several said they would come in the spring
 - How to better combat weather issues in the future?
 - Arboretum was nominated by the South Junior High science teachers for a Partner in Education Award
 - Solar farm is operational
 - An educational kiosk will be installed at the solar farm

- \$2000 from Br. Benedict/Abbey
 - \$2000 from Westwood Renewables
 - ?? from Arboretum
- Kiosk will have power, a demonstration solar panel, and other educational tools
- Will be able to monitor current power production live from a computer
- Hopefully will help encourage more tours from middle and high school classes as we develop curriculum
- School of Theology Intern
 - Greg Miller took the initiative after the last council meeting to visit with the SOT about a potential intern to help increase our spirituality programming and collaborations
 - Several students expressed interest
 - Sarah will get together with Greg early in January to develop the internship
- Japanese student visit (Tom Haeg helped organize)
 - 50 high school students came on a visit to Minnesota in November
 - Came to Saint John's and toured the Arboretum as part of their visit
 - Great reviews from the students, the high school, and other officials in Japan and the U.S.
 - Perhaps continue the relationship and have the students come back again next year

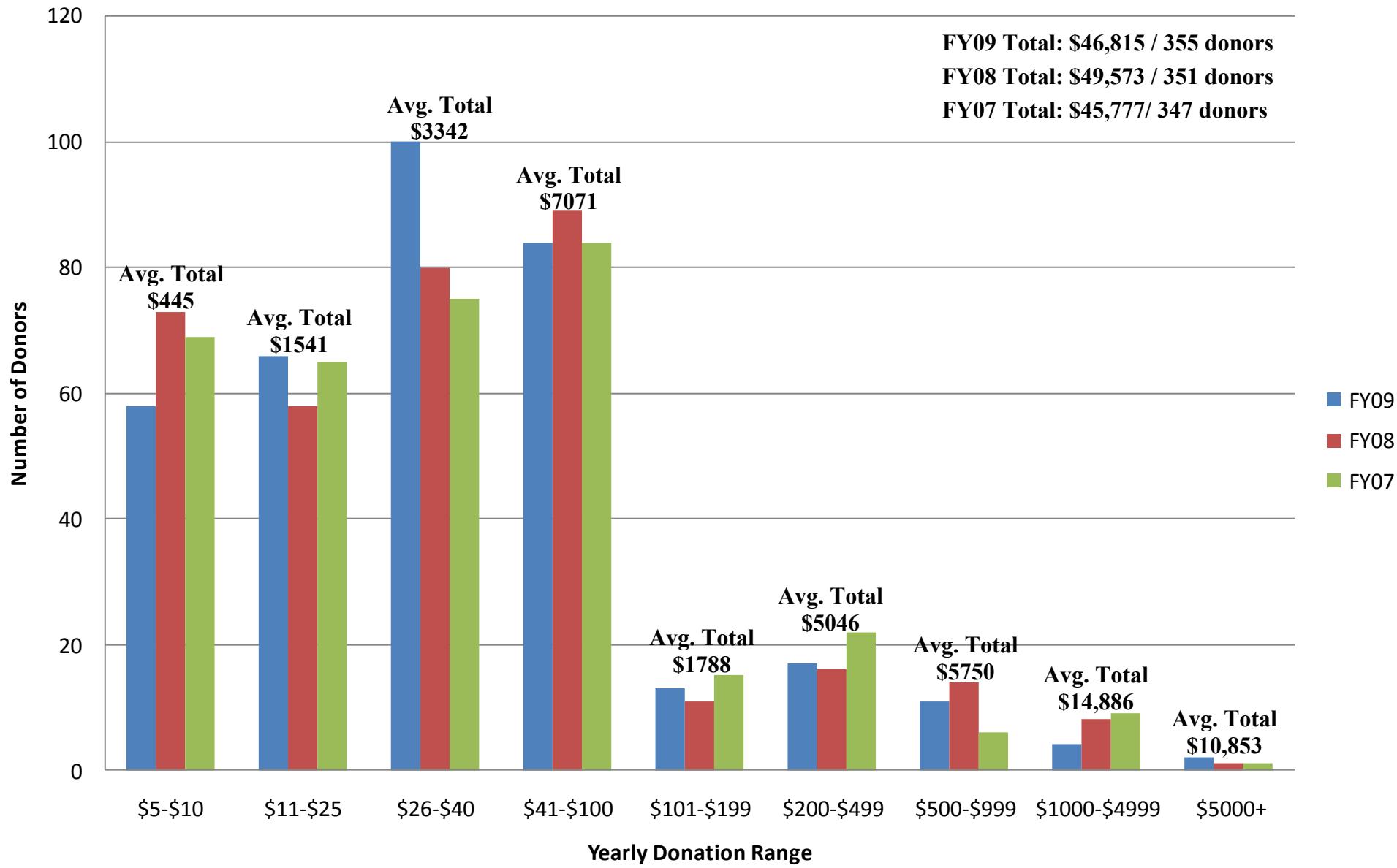
2010 Council Meetings—Mark your calendars!

- February 18-19: committee meetings to plan for FY2011 (not a 2-day meeting—the committee meetings will be spread out over the two days, everybody is welcome at any committee meeting)
- June 14: FY2010 year-end evaluation
- October 4: long-range planning, 2-3 years out
- December 3: short meeting, committee updates, unfinished business, set up for Open House

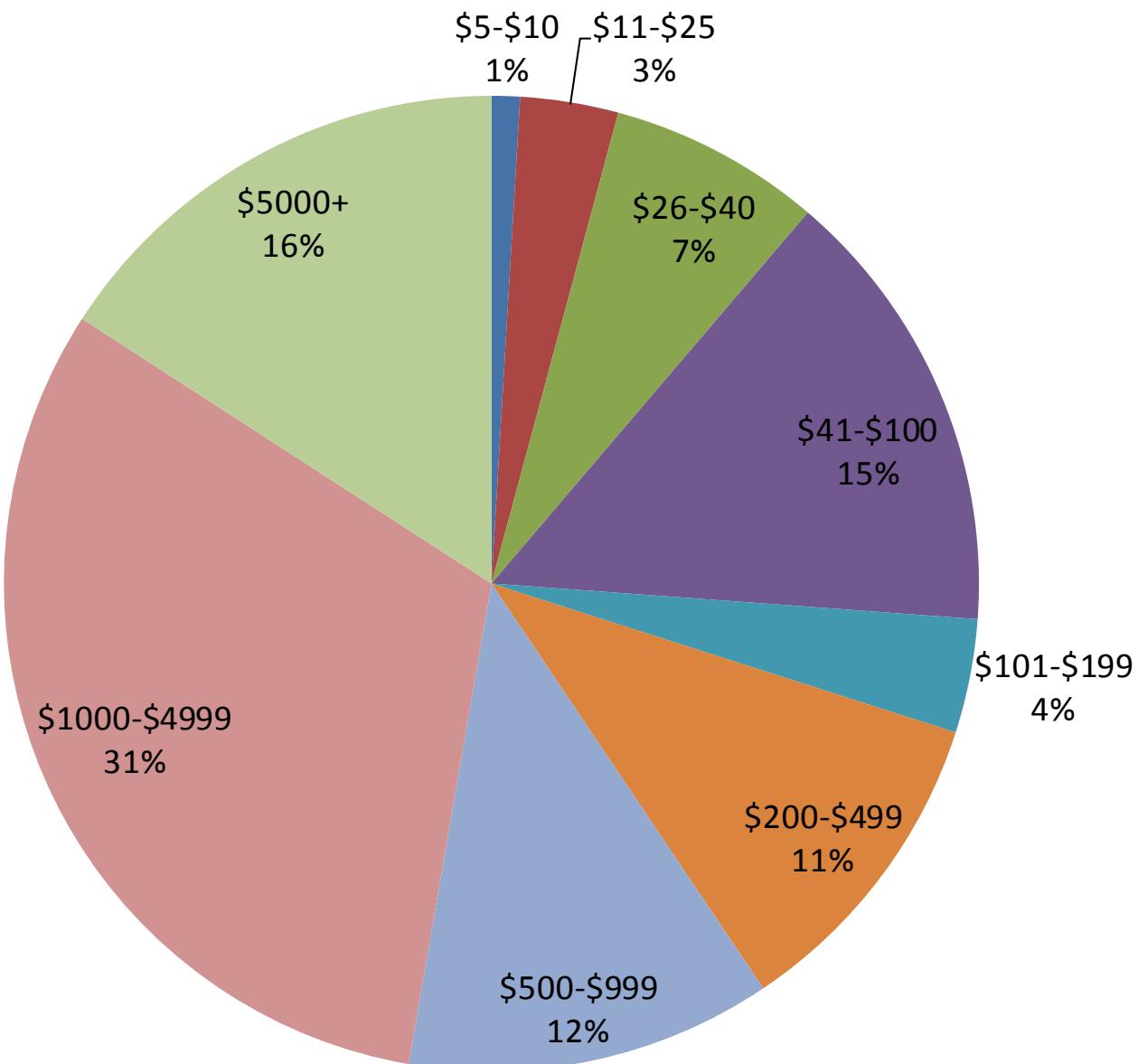
Membership by Zip Code



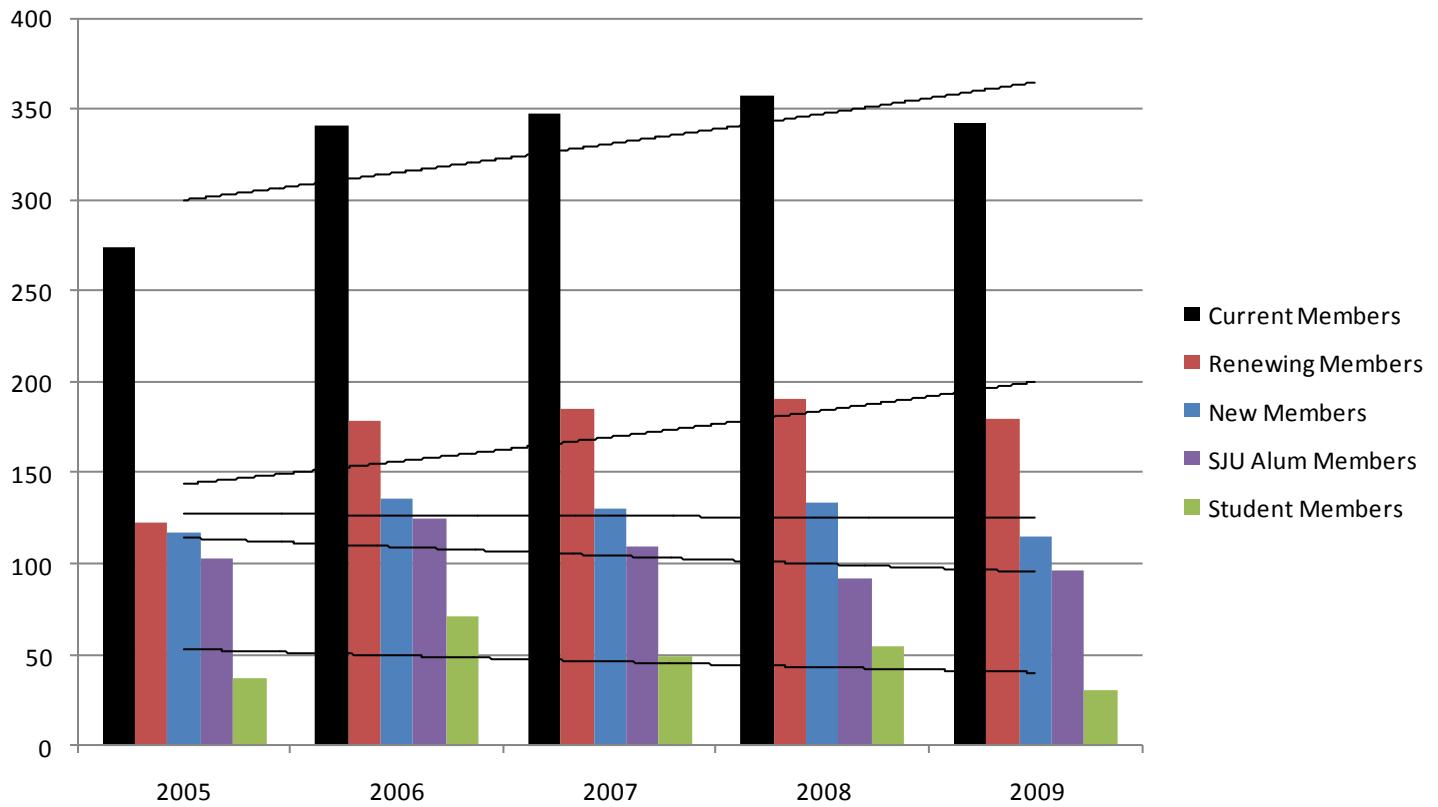
Donation Summary FY07-FY09



Percent of Total Donations by Donation Range (FY07-09 Avg.)



Membership Numbers



Highlights:

- Membership numbers are have stayed pretty steady the last 4 years. Is this ok?
- New memberships are generally steady from year to year.
- Renewing memberships are increasing—connectedness
- A significant difference between alum and student memberships could indicate that a connection is being made as a student that inspires giving after graduation.

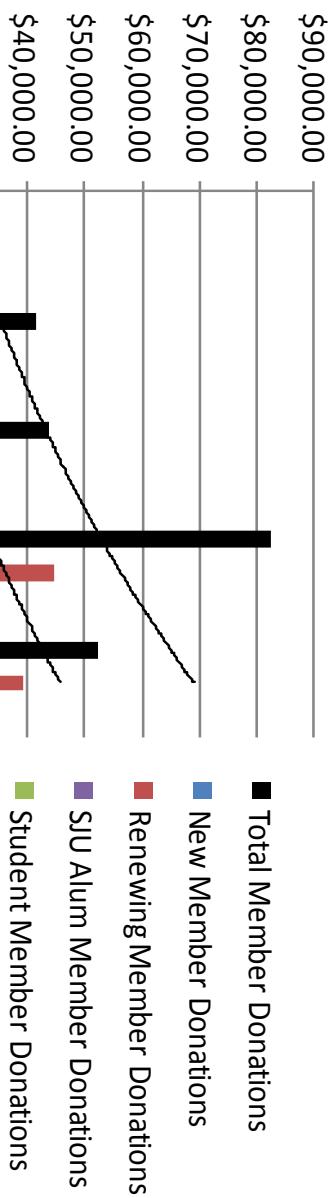
Challenges:

- Student and Alum members seem to be *slightly* decreasing
- Total memberships maintaining around 350 for past 4 years. How to increase total numbers?
- How to increase student memberships?
- Total membership increases don't reflect the yearly number of new members. Who are we losing each year and why?

Data Caveats:

- CSB Alums are not pulled out in the alum category. The SJU gift system recognizes them as Arb friends rather than alums. My estimate based on the current member list puts CSB Alums numbers currently at a level similar to SJU Alums, although I can't estimate and compare total gifts between the two.
- New and renewing does not necessarily equal total. This is due to the method of pulling the statistics, but despite the limitations, the method gives us a sense of the trends from year to year.
- The total numbers do not include honorary memberships and soft-credit memberships, which is why the numbers seem low. We have 184 honorary memberships today.
- Actual student memberships may be about double what is shown due to limits in software when pulling statistics

Member Donations



Highlights:

- Member donations are consistently increasing in all categories
- Renewing member donations are highest percentage of donors—connectedness, environmental literacy.
- There is a significant increasing trend in gift size per member.

***Spike in donations in 2008 due to a couple of large (\$10,000+ gifts)

Average Gift per Member

