

You are the president of a small college that continually faces intense budgetary pressure. Recently the head of the college's development office, which oversees fund raising, brings a recent article to your attention describing how many U.S. colleges and universities have begun aggressively soliciting contributions from firms that do business with them. The article quotes the development director at one university as suggesting that a college should have its board members "ask nicely but firmly" for gifts from vendors. "If there are none, change vendors," this development director advises. The article, however, also includes quotations from development directors at other colleges that express the diametrically opposed viewpoint that colleges should never send a message to a company that doing business 'With the college depends upon making a donation.

What should you advise the head of the college development office concerning the college policy in connection with soliciting donations from companies that do business with the college, and why?

Questions for the IIT Ethics Bowl (October 19, 1996)

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