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A year has passed since we began to correspond with participants in the AHP CEO Philanthropy Connection about the roles and responsibilities of CEOs and CDOs in advancing philanthropy to support the hospitals and health care systems they serve. Our discussions have covered a range of topics relating to the values and processes of fundraising, and I sincerely hope you have found these conversations useful and stimulating.

Today, as economic challenges strain the resources of so many nonprofits in the health care community, I believe one significant, underlying thought worth considering is our need to create a “culture of philanthropy” to sustain and grow support for our institutions. What does this term mean to you? What attributes and actions make up its components? It’s interesting to observe the different approaches to this concept that various experts offer, emphasizing a number of ideas as food for thought:

Writing in this year’s summer issue of *Frontiers of Health Services Management*, Loren Shook, CEO and president of Silverado Living, states, “It all starts with a vision...to create a successful culture of philanthropy, an organization’s CEO must recognize the need for a compelling vision and back it 100 percent.”

Jeri Alcock, an Oregon-based fundraising consultant, writes, “More than anything else, a culture of philanthropy is an attitude that embraces relationship building. Once you build a community of believers, the money will follow.”

Development specialist Simone P. Joyaux advocates for system-wide focus. She counsels that creating a culture of philanthropy “...means that everyone in the organization...from the janitor to the president of the board...understands that philanthropy and fund development are critical to the organizational health AND that each individual (both the janitor and the board president) has a role in the process.”

It is up to you as the CEO to engender the attitude which builds relationships necessary for philanthropy over mere transactional relationships.

The AHP Performance Benchmarking Service attempts to objectively identify and measure certain key elements of that contribute of a culture of philanthropy. Do you believe, however, that the whole may be greater than and different from the sum of its parts? Is philanthropy more art than science?

Please feel free to call me at AHP’s headquarters at (703) 532-6243 with your advice and thoughts. My e-mail address is [bill@ahp.org](mailto:bill@ahp.org), or at the above address. I look forward to hearing from you and to continuing our conversation.

Very truly yours,

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President and Chief Executive Officer  
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encl. [AHP Performance Benchmarking Service General Overview Report, FY 2006](#)