Defying Gravity
The Story of One School Facing the Reality of Its Demise Head-On

Sarah Flowers & Katy Roybal

Guests: Amy Jolly, Dr. Evan Beachy
Introduction

Sarah’s Story

Other Perspectives

Q & A
Take Aways

• Predictive Factors
• Timeline Considerations
• Practical and Emotional Considerations
• Role of Leadership in Navigating Closure
• Resources
Sarah’s Story
WHAT I KNEW

- Not Yet Self Sustaining
- Founding Board
- Another Transition: Death Knell
Gravity

Lift

Thrust

Drag
Debt

Enrollment

Unsuccessful Capitol Campaign

Capitol Campaign

Crisis

Demographic Shift or Economic Downturn

Deferred Maintenance

Overhead

Tuition

Reputation/Longevity

Successful Capitol Campaign

Sudden Increase in Enrollment

Windfall/Angel Donors

Enrollment/Tuition

Giving

Tuition

Deferred Maintenance
Debt

Decreased Enrollment

Unsuccessful Capitol Campaign

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Windfall/Angel Donors

Enrollment/Tuition

Giving

Tuition

Reputation/Longevity

Overhead

Decreased Enrollment

Unsuccessful Capitol Campaign

Crisis

Demographic Shift or Economic Downturn

Deferred Maintenance
1. Decision Date

2. Target number registered for Admissions Tours?
   - Yes
     - Likelihood of Fundraising [amount needed] to cover expenses through Jan 2018
       - High
         - Plan to Open in [coming school year]
       - Low
         - Plan to Close in May 2018
   - No
     - Likelihood of Fundraising [amount] to cover expenses through May 2018
       - High
         - Plan to Close in Jan 2018
       - Low
         - Plan to Close by Dec 15

3. Likelihood of Fundraising [amount needed] to cover expenses through Jan 2018
   - High
     - Plan to Open in [coming school year]
   - Low
     - Plan to Close in May 2018

4. Likelihood of Fundraising [amount] to cover expenses through May 2018
   - High
     - Plan to Close in Jan 2018
   - Low

5. Likelihood of Fundraising [amount] to cover expenses through Jan 2018
   - High
     - Plan to Close in Jan 2018
   - Low

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1. Decision Date means the date on which the board will decide whether or not to close the school.
2. Target number is derived from historic admissions funnel data.
3. Assumes loss of deferred revenue will result in operating deficit, thus making add'l funds necessary to finish the year.
4. If enrollment growth isn’t likely and school can’t rely on deferred revenue to cover operations through the (final) year, this is the amount required to make up the difference.
5. If fundraised amount is projected to be less than required to finish the year, this is the amount required to close the year earlier.
Sept - Nov

**Board:**
Set Decision Date
Establish metrics needed for survival
  - Fundraising
  - Enrollment
Meet with Major Donors

**Head of School:**
Share metrics with Faculty, Families, engage them in getting there
**December**

**Board:**
- Vote to Close
- Host Town Hall
- State of the School - ensure everyone has the same info

**Head of School:**
- Communicate w/ all constituents
- Reassurance

**Faculty**
- Support students
  - Transition
  - Normalizing

**Parents**
- Focused on children’s next steps
Jan - Apr

**Board:**
Fundraising to Close

**Head of School:**
Supporting Students
Cutting Staff
Adjusting Program
Normalizing for faculty

**Faculty**
Planning for their futures
Normalizing

**Parents:**
Helping to Plan Spring Events
Fill in staffing gaps
Caring for faculty
May - Close

Board:
Hosts Community Celebration
Fiduciary Matters

Head of School:
Planning for Graduation
Galvanizing Community

Faculty:
Spring Performance
Normalizing

Families:
Spring Performance
Perspectives From Other School Leaders

Guests:
Amy Jolly
Dr. Evan Beachy
Call to Action:

• Establish Principles of Good Practice
• Establish Network of Support
• Role of Associations in Providing Guidance
• Collect and share resources
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