

## **SENIOR FELLOWS AND FRIENDS**

Alert. Relaxed. Collegial.



### **Recap of 7/30/24 Session: Wendy Chen on Crowdfunding, A New Arena of Organizational Fundraising**

Dear Senior Fellows and Friends,

Last week, we met with Dr. Wendy Chen to discuss her recent research on crowdfunding. Wendy serves as Assistant Professor in Public Administration - Public and Non-profit management and leadership, Social Entrepreneurship and Finance at Texas Tech University. Crowdfunding was her dissertation topic. It's clear that she's up to speed on both crowdfunding (raising money for a project or venture from a large group of people, usually online) and crowdsourcing (obtaining ideas, solutions, or services from a large and diverse group of people, also often online).

After an hour's worth of discussion, I was visualizing Wendy as the director of a startup incubator! She has the knack of engaging participants, simplifying complicated subjects, and

communicating across disciplines – although her real passion is broader: she wants to break silos. Due to my own boundary spanning activity, I expect that we'll do more work together in the future.

You may view the slides Wendy used by clicking on this link: [https://mcusercontent.com/203a04fc81077b7257d268747/files/12d29952-6b94-fec6-6c78-afe677107369/Wendy\\_Chén\\_slides\\_used\\_at\\_SFF.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/203a04fc81077b7257d268747/files/12d29952-6b94-fec6-6c78-afe677107369/Wendy_Chén_slides_used_at_SFF.pdf).

One of the things you'll notice – and this came up early in discussion – is that the examples are drawn from local governments here and abroad. Many of us think in terms of federal government first because our experience is rooted there. This session was an opportunity to stretch our perspectives to think about the viability of crowdfunding innovation in a localgov or nonprofit environment.

The conversation revolved around the following topics:

- Why some local government entities have tried this at all;
- How crowdfunding results are affected by the practical utility of the idea and the perceived legitimacy of the requesting organization;
- How a donor's trust that government will use the funds for the stated purpose depends on the latter's competent communication of past successes;
- The fact that organizations with mediocre track records or poorly communicated successes first need to regain legitimacy and trust before crowdfunding is an option;
- Is crowdfunding a generational thing? Wendy's research seemed to indicate that it was, and that the most important factor was the perceived legitimacy of the requestor;
- "Starting is the hardest."

Although everyone focused mostly on the local government examples, our friends participating from Australia expressed interest in applying crowdfunding to nonprofit medical startups

there and in Maldives. It seemed likely that more conversation would occur and we wish everyone luck.

### **Win/win opportunity**

Per Wendy, "I am collecting narratives from public sector employees to uncover examples of innovative practices, entrepreneurial initiatives, and effective management/leadership strategies that are making a positive impact across all levels of government. Would you please kindly share it with your Senior Fellows & Friends network?"

Don't be shy! If you want to explore this with her, please contact her directly at [wendy.chen@ttu.edu](mailto:wendy.chen@ttu.edu). Also, please forward the recap to someone else who may wish to respond.


### **Participant affiliations**

ASPA National Capital Area Chapter  
Calvary Health Care (Australia)  
Kent State University  
KM/HR Systems Auditors  
Patient Safety & Quality Improvement Advocate (Maldives)  
Texas Tech University

People joined from Lubbock, TX; New South Wales, Australia; Colorado Springs, CO; Fredericksburg, VA; and the DC/MD/VA Metro Area.

Each time, we begin with a round of introductions to warm up the space. Afterward, participants are sent a "Who was in the room" message to facilitate reconnection. Please consider joining us in the future.

Sincerely,  
Kitty Wooley



## HOW WILL YOU CONTRIBUTE?

Cooperating freely, learning on the fly, empowering ourselves, and navigating unknown waters beyond the edge of the comfort zone are the name of the game. We began our public leadership journey in calm harbors, and now we're surrounded by the white water of constant change. Business as usual isn't working well enough. We choose to gather our strengths and lead from wherever we are, applying our best efforts to the challenges of our time. Are you coming?