

**“INVESTMENT, NOT CHARITY!” – INDIRECT FUNDRAISING COMMUNICATION
STRATEGIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP
(CORPUS-ASSISTED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS)**

**«ІНВЕСТИЦІЯ, А НЕ БЛАГОДІЙНІСТЬ!»: СТРАТЕГІЇ НЕПРЯМОЇ
ФАНДРЕЙЗИНГОВОЇ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ ЛІДЕРІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ
(КОРПУСНО-ДИСКУРСИВНИЙ АНАЛІЗ)**

Molodcha N.S.,

orcid.org/0000-0002-8467-6408

PhD in Philology,

Associate Professor at the Foreign Languages and Translation Department

Kharkiv University of Humanities “People’s Ukrainian Academy”,

Researcher

Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU)

Khilkovska A.O.,

orcid.org/0000-0003-1659-9428

Associate Professor,

Head of Foreign Languages and Translation Department

Kharkiv University of Humanities “People’s Ukrainian Academy”

This study examines the indirect fundraising rhetoric of the *Dzau Lecture on Global Health*, delivered by Lawrence H. Summers – former President of Harvard University and U.S. Treasury Secretary – as a compelling example of values-driven academic leadership. Rather than making explicit financial appeals, Summers reframes global health as a shared moral and institutional priority, aligning philanthropic investment with long-term social impact. Through rhetorical devices such as humor, metaphor, anaphora, hyperbole, and historical framing, he constructs a vision-oriented narrative that invites stakeholders into a collective mission of transformation. Methodologically, the analysis employs a discourse approach combining qualitative analysis with corpus-assisted techniques to uncover persuasive patterns, lexical salience, and stylistic features. Grounded in Aristotelian theory of rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos, logos), the study highlights how indirect appeals and narrative coherence function as powerful tools of institutional persuasion. The research results suggest that Summers’ address positions the university president not merely as an academic administrator and steward of resources, but also as a strategic moral leader – someone who mobilizes support through vision, credibility, and emotional intelligence. The findings not only expand the field of discourse studies, particularly in the areas of academic-administrative discourse, genre, and rhetorical theories, but also contribute to research in higher education leadership, philanthropy, and public policy. They offer a rare, detailed account of how elite academic figures can deploy strategic discourse to mobilize institutional support, influence donor behavior, and frame global challenges as opportunities for shared legacy and ethical engagement. Subsequent research may investigate how academic leaders across cultures employ indirect fundraising discourse to integrate ethical messaging with institutional purpose and strategic positioning.

Key words: academic-administrative discourse, academic leadership, corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, rhetorical strategy, corpus linguistics, university fundraising.

Дослідження аналізує непряму фандрейзингову риторику лекції Дзау з глобальної охорони здоров'я, виглошеної Лоренсом Г. Саммерсом, колишнім президентом Гарвардського університету та міністром фінансів США, як переконливий приклад ціннісно-орієнтованого лідерства в академічному середовищі. Замість прямих фінансових закликів, Саммерс переосмислює проблему глобального здоров'я як спільний моральний та інституційний пріоритет, пов'язуючи філантропічні інвестиції з довгостроковим соціальним впливом. Використовуючи такі риторичні засоби, як гумор, метафора, анафора, гіпербола та історичне обрамлення, він вибудовує наратив, орієнтований на образ майбутнього, що залучає зацікавлені сторони до спільної трансформаційної місії. У методологічному плані дослідження ґрунтується на дискурсивному підході, який поєднує якісний аналіз із корпусно-лінгвістичними техніками для виявлення переконливих патернів, засобів лексичної виразності та стилістичних особливостей. На основі аристотелівських риторичних апеляцій (етос, патос, логос) дослідження демонструє, як непрямі заклики та наративна послідовність слугують ефективними інструментами інституційного переконання.

Результати свідчать, що виступ Саммерса позиціює університетського президента не лише як академічного адміністратора й управління ресурсами, а й як стратегічного морального лідера – особу, здатну мобілізувати підтримку завдяки візіонерству, авторитету та емоційному інтелекту. Отримані результати не лише розширюють межі дискурсології, зокрема в контексті академічно-адміністративного дискурсу, жанрової специфіки та риторичних теорій, але й роблять вагомий внесок у дослідження лідерства у сфері вищої освіти, філантропії та публічної політики. Робота пропонує унікальний, докладний приклад того, як провідні академічні постаті можуть застосовувати стратегічний дискурс для мобілізації інституційної підтримки, впливу на поведінку донорів та переосмислення глобальних викликів як можливостей для спільної спадщини й етичної участі. Майбутні дослід-

дження можуть зосередитися на тому, як академічні лідери в різних культурних контекстах використовують непряму фандрейзингову риторику для поєднання етичних посилів з інституційною метою та стратегічним позиціонуванням.

Ключові слова: академічно-адміністративний дискурс, академічне лідерство, корпусна лінгвістика, дискурс-аналіз, риторичні стратегії, фандрейзинг у вищій освіті.

Introduction. In the evolving landscape of higher education, university presidents are required to perform far beyond their traditional academic roles. They are expected to lead ethically, manage crises, navigate cultural complexities, and, crucially, secure financial resources to sustain institutional operations and ambitions. As government and public funding continue to decline, the pressure to attract philanthropic support has intensified. Fundraising, once the domain of development offices, has become a central function of presidential leadership. At many institutions, presidents spend a significant portion of their time cultivating donor relationships and communicating the university's mission in ways that resonate with external stakeholders.

This shift has placed new emphasis on the rhetorical and strategic dimensions of presidential communication. While direct appeals for financial contributions remain common, a subtler form of engagement has emerged: indirect fundraising communication. This involves mobilizing support not through explicit financial requests but through lectures, addresses and statements that emphasize shared values, global impact, and long-term vision. Such strategies aim to align the institution's goals with donors' identities and aspirations, building trust and legitimacy through narrative, emotional resonance, and moral framing.

This study explores the use of indirect fundraising strategies in academic-administrative discourse, with particular attention to presidential communications at elite universities such as Harvard. Through corpus-assisted discourse analysis, it examines how rhetorical techniques function to attract donors' interest without explicit solicitation. By focusing on high-profile case, including the Dzau Lecture on Global Health delivered by then-President of Harvard University [13], the research reveals how language shapes institutional positioning and serves as a powerful tool for mobilizing financial support.

Literature review. University presidents (UP) occupy increasingly complex and multifaceted roles in higher education governance, engaging simultaneously in administrative, academic, and financial domains. A growing body of scholarship has examined how presidential characteristics and leadership strategies influence institutional outcomes [2; 10; 14]. Recent research extends this inquiry by exploring how UPs employ strategic discourse to reflect and negotiate cultural, ethical, and rhetorical expect-

tations across diverse national contexts. For instance, a phenomenological study of foreign-born UPs in the United States found that these leaders operate between 'two worlds,' navigating cultural identities and institutional expectations, while shaping ethical and strategic decisions through a globalized lens [10]. Similarly, Wang [17], applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, compared commencement speeches from Harvard and Peking Universities, demonstrating how national cultural frameworks shape rhetorical style and leadership messaging. In another cross-cultural study, Li and Zhang [7] used text mining to analyze Japanese university presidents' ceremonial addresses, revealing a consistent rhetorical structure that reflects culturally embedded academic values and intentional communicative design.

The ethical leadership dimension is further explored by Zhang and Dacanay [19], who analyzed Chinese university presidents' leadership traits – such as moral motivation and professional competence – and their impact on faculty satisfaction. Their findings affirm the growing expectation that university leaders act not only as administrators but also as ethical role models. An analysis of U.S. university presidents' public statements following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine reveals a rhetoric characterized by diplomacy, institutional balance, and collegiality, demonstrating how ethical and strategic discourse can navigate politically sensitive contexts while preserving academic integrity [9]. These examples collectively underscore the symbolic and strategic power of presidential rhetoric in shaping institutional identity, moral authority, and global engagement.

In the analysis of academic-administrative discourse genres [8], which reflect UPs' responsibilities and communicative frameworks, recent studies have identified fundraising as a central component of presidential leadership. Presidents now spend between more than their two thirds of their time on fundraising activities balancing other leadership duties [2; 3; 10; 14]. Cook [2] predicted that failure to raise money might cost a president their position. In light of growing financial constraints, this role has become more strategic. Successful university fundraisers among presidents have been shown to exhibit a distinct set of qualities, including "entrepreneurial behavior", "authentic conviction of the importance of fundraising", "ability to develop relationship with

donors and stakeholders” [10, p. 58]. Fundraising success is closely tied to a president’s capacity to articulate a clear and compelling institutional vision – one that establishes priorities and instills confidence in donors. Greeley Myers [10] emphasizes the president’s role as the institution’s “chief storyteller,” tasked with consistently communicating the university’s mission and core values [10, p. 59].

The deficit of finances at the university urges to consider non-traditional presidents for the position to lead the university and navigate complex financial landscapes, securing long-term institutional sustainability. Allen & Turner [1] demonstrate that UP from outside academia often excel in alumni fundraising by resonating with diverse donor bases. The financial challenges are so acute that even undergraduates participate in fundraising activities, seeking sponsors to cover their tuition, while the university collaborates with stakeholders and provides institutional guidance and support [18].

The discursive analysis of the fundraising statements enabled to identify *explicit*, direct requests for funds and *implicit* fundraising appeals. Explicit communication strategies conveying deep appreciation for donors’ contributions include rhetoric and pragmatic resources to sustain the encouraging and grateful tone. Among them are expressives “I am humbled by the generosity...”; declaratives “We set a new record...”; appeals to pathos “you have my deepest gratitude” and ethos “light and truth”, referring to university’s mission and values; pronouns to represent collective voice “We... our... Yale community...” as well as enumeration in assertives – “More than 46,000... contributed \$826.8 million...”. These language resources are used to celebrate donors who are supporting the mission of the university [11]. While *direct* appeals are essential, UP often use more subtle way of message delivering – indirect fundraising rhetoric which is embedded in broader messages about institutional priorities, social justice or global leadership – to build trust and align donor interests with university missions. Such rhetoric is frequently found in values-driven and science-grounded lectures, reports, and testimonies [5].

The aim of this study is to analyze how UPs construct indirect fundraising rhetoric. With limited academic focus on these strategies, particularly within U.S. higher education, the research aims to contribute original insights into the role of presidential discourse in securing private support. The closer look is given to the “Dzau Lecture on Global Health” authored by Lawrence H. Summers’ [13], then-president of Harvard university.

Methodology. This study employs a corpus-assisted discourse analysis (CDA) approach to examine indirect fundraising strategies in presidential communications at elite U.S. universities. It focuses on how language functions not merely to inform or celebrate, but to strategically engage donors by aligning institutional values with philanthropic imperatives.

The theoretical foundation draws upon the discourse analysis frameworks of Fairclough [4], van Dijk [15], and Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. [16]. These models enable analysis of the ideological, pragmatic, and rhetorical dimensions of institutional discourse. The study also applies Aristotle’s rhetorical appeals – ethos, pathos, and logos – along with stylistic and pragmatic devices to uncover persuasive strategies embedded in presidential messaging [12; 6].

Corpus and Data Sources. This study centers on a detailed case analysis of the 2005 Dzau Lecture on Global Health [13], delivered by Lawrence H. Summers, then-president of Harvard University. The lecture serves as the primary data point, exemplary of indirect fundraising rhetoric in university presidential communication. Its strategic alignment of institutional, ethical, and human-centered priorities with donor interests makes it a compelling subject for rhetorical and discourse analysis.

To contextualize the discussion and findings, a supplementary corpus was assembled comprising selected presidential communications from Harvard and Yale Universities. These include financial reports, messages to alumni and donors, testimonies before legislative committees [5], and public expressions of gratitude [11]. While these sources provide broader insight into institutional fundraising discourse, they function primarily as a comparative framework to support the central analysis of the Dzau Lecture.

Research design included corpus preparation and analysis (texts were selected based on thematic relevance to indirect fundraising and donor engagement; quantitative-statistical analysis (key terms, thematic frequency, and discourse patterns were identified using the Voyant Tools platform); qualitative analysis (the Dzau Lecture was subjected to close reading, focusing on logical structure, rhetorical strategies, speech acts and stylistic devices); findings were synthesized to assess the communicative effectiveness and broader implications of presidential rhetoric in resource-constrained academic environments.

Context of the Dzau Lecture on Global Health. A central text for the analysis is the 2005 Dzau Lecture on Global Health, delivered by Harvard President Lawrence H. Summers. The lecture series, named after Victor J. Dzau, highlights the strategic and ethical imperatives of advancing global health equity.

Summers' address – delivered during his presidency at Harvard and tenure as a former U.S. Treasury Secretary – framed global health as a core institutional and geopolitical priority, integrating economic rationale with moral urgency. The lecture was hosted by the Division of Social Medicine and Health Inequalities at Brigham and Women's Hospital, a key Harvard Medical School affiliate committed to addressing systemic health disparities. This institutional context reinforces the speech's alignment with broader academic and public health advocacy efforts.

Findings. Using Voyant Tools for corpus analysis, key terms central to the Dzau Lecture were identified. The word “*health*” emerged most prominently, appearing in varied collocations such as “*health care systems*”, “*health interventions*”, and “*global health*”. These terms framed the address's dual focus: highlighting persistent disparities in healthcare funding in developing nations and celebrating Harvard students' growing interest in social medicine and global volunteerism. Similarly, the term “*life*” surfaced in constructs like “*life expectancy*” and “*life sciences*”, which Summers connected to institutional expertise in business and law, arguing for investment in global health as both a moral obligation and strategic economic opportunity.

The Dzau Lecture exemplifies an indirect, values-driven fundraising appeal, while balancing Aristotelian rhetorical appeals – ethos, pathos, and logos – to persuade an academic and policy-oriented audience of the urgency and value of engaging in global health initiatives.

Ethos. Summers builds credibility by referencing his leadership roles at Harvard, the U.S. Treasury, and the World Bank. These credentials lend authority to his discourse on economic development and health equity. Statements such as “When I was at the World Bank...” and “When I became president of Harvard...” anchor his expertise. He further reinforces Harvard's institutional role in global health by referencing respected figures like Victor Dzau and his own policy work in Indonesia and Africa: “I spent a summer in Jakarta working as an economic development advisor to the government of Indonesia.” This appeals to institutional ethos while signaling Harvard's global engagement.

Pathos. Then-President Summers evokes emotional resonance through stark statistics and vivid contrasts, evoking sympathy, despair and moral urgency about poverty solutions. “Opportunities to spend 25 dollars and save a life through oral rehydration therapy are being missed.” By quantifying suffering in such tangible terms, Summers moves beyond abstract policy and touches on the emotional

and ethical implications of inaction: “Africa as a continent today is poorer than it was 35 years ago” further underscoring the emotional gravity of global inequality. Contrasts work well in the fundraising speech together with irony. “In 1988 I happen to remember being in a car in Chicago and the car had a telephone. Because the car had a telephone, I called everyone I knew because it was really quite remarkable to be in a car with a telephone. Eight years later, I went on behalf of the U.S. Treasury and visited a village on the Ivory Coast and had the honor of turning the knob and inaugurating a well that was going to be the first source of fresh water for that village. ... Right there somebody stuck a cell phone in my face and said “Bob Rubin has a question about the IRS appropriation.” This shows the striking contrast with the element of irony of ‘rich and progressive countries’ and ‘poor countries’ applauding the well opening and severe underinvestment in global health.

Logos. Empirical evidence and economic theory are integrated to justify investment in global health. Referring to the World Development Report (1993), Summers argues that low-cost health interventions offer disproportionately high returns. He draws historical comparisons – between modern Asia and the Industrial Revolution – to highlight the transformative power of targeted investment. “If you spend a dollar in area A and it yields twice the return of area B, you should reallocate funds until returns are equalized.” This logic reframes health spending not as charity, but as rational and efficient resource allocation with measurable ROI.

The text analysis underscores in fundraising the importance of *return on investment (ROI)*. In the Dzau Lecture on Global Health, Lawrence H. Summers states that basic health interventions in developing countries offer exceptionally high returns, both economically and socially. In China and India investment in global healthcare and raising living standards reduced disease burden and increased productivity. Yet these areas remain chronically underfunded. This not only addresses urgent health needs but also advances institutional purpose, innovation, and global equity. ROI framework emphasizes a) *Funding as investment and business, not charity* implying that investment in global health returns many more in productivity, stability, and human potential. “... If we look at what's happening in the health care system, there is probably no area where the disparity in the returns on different investments around the world is greater”; “global health... where the social rate of return is surely incredibly high”; b) *Linking funding to legacy and long-term vision* – “What we fund today will shape what history remembers of us

250 years from now”, positioning donors and institutions as architects of history; c). *Being transparent about gaps* “... the pharmaceutical industry over the last several years has spent more money on pet disease than it has on diseases that are unique to the tropics. ... it suggests that there is a very large gap for those of us in academic life to fill, and we need to do much more.” Additional appeals to data, historical precedent, and economic logic constitute a strong use of logos.

In analyzing the Dzau Lecture on Global Health, we examined speech acts – communicative actions performed through language – using core concepts from Speech Act Theory [12]. The lecture reveals a strategic deployment of different speech act types, with *assertives* and *directives* emerging as the most dominant.

Assertives constitute the backbone of the lecture, as the speaker presents factual statements, evaluative claims, and reasoned arguments designed to establish belief and guide understanding. These include references to global poverty, public health challenges, and institutional responsibility: “A billion people still live on less than a dollar a day.” “Africa as a continent today is poorer than it was 35 years ago.” “We need to think in a very serious and comprehensive way about issues of global health.” Such statements contribute to epistemic authority, anchoring the argument in evidence and positioning global health as both a moral imperative and a strategic priority.

Directives are also prominent, serving to mobilize the academic community toward concrete action. While diplomatically framed, these utterances function as appeals for increased institutional engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration, and long-term commitment: “We need to do much more because as a university, we are in a special and a different position.” “We need to think more about bringing all the different kinds of expertise that a university has.” “We need to be very disciplined, very careful, but also very creative...” These calls to action are performative in nature, urging the university to take leadership in addressing global health disparities.

Additionally, the lecture includes *expressives*, which convey the speaker’s emotional stance and ethical convictions. Phrases such as “I was actually quite struck by...” and “What was staggering was how high those returns were” communicate personal engagement and moral resonance, fostering a sense of urgency and shared purpose.

In the analysis of the Dzau Lecture, which implicitly advocates for increased institutional funding, several stylistic devices emerge as key rhetorical strategies:

Humor and irony are used to highlight the rapid pace of technological change and its implications for global disparity. For example, the speaker contrasts past limitations with today’s expectations of instant connectivity: “At the time I was very eager to follow the Red Sox and to know what happened in their games, and there really was no way to know. If I was lucky, on Thursday I could get Tuesday’s International Herald Tribune, which would have the score and would have nothing else. And yet today we take it as an absolute matter of course that we are instantly in touch.”

Hyperbole, an intentional exaggeration used for rhetorical effect, dramatizes the fleeting nature of contemporary events in the context of long-term historical memory: “I realized that there was not actually going to be an enormous amount from when we were alive that will be in history books 250 years from now.”

Anaphora, the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences, is used to build emphasis and emotional resonance. “If one took no account of grief of those who lost a loved one, if one took no account of pain and suffering, if one took no account of freedom from worry, and if one simply looked at the benefits in terms of the increased productivity of the workforce, in terms of the increased contribution to economic wellbeing, there were few investments as productive as investments in improving healthcare in the developing world.”

Geopolitical and historical references – “Industrial Revolution”, “fall of the Berlin Wall”, “Soviet system” referring to argue historical significance of the issues discussed in the lecture.

Personal storytelling – “I remember being in Jakarta 25 years ago, unable to even check a baseball score. Now, villagers call Washington from a canoe.” – to humanize funding needs and build credibility and emotional resonance.

The *metaphor* such as “stand on the shoulders of giants”, famously attributed to Isaac Newton, serves in this context to emphasize the cumulative nature of scientific knowledge, particularly in the life sciences. By invoking this phrase, the speaker situates current biomedical advances not as isolated breakthroughs, but as part of a long continuum of discovery and intellectual inheritance.

Together, these stylistic devices frame global health not merely as a policy issue, but as a profound moral, intellectual, and historical challenge – one that calls for bold institutional vision and sustained philanthropic support.

Discussion and concluding remarks. The role of UPs as fundraisers has expanded dramatically, often consuming a substantial portion of their time.

Fundraising is now a daily, essential activity that requires UPs to act not only as academic leaders but also as the institution's chief representatives to donors and external stakeholders. This shift reflects growing economic pressures and heightened competition for private funding, making effective fundraising a complex and indispensable part of presidential leadership [10].

The Dzau Lecture on Global Health by former Harvard President Lawrence Summers illustrates this indirect approach. Rather than overt fundraising, Summers presents global health as a moral and strategic imperative, aligning institutional purpose with donor values and prompting philanthropic action through vision-led discourse.

Implicit fundraising rhetoric strategies and framing. Summers' Dzau Lecture employs implicit fundraising rhetoric through a return-on-investment (ROI) lens, framing funding as strategic investment rather than charity. Anchored in Aristotelian appeals – ethos (his authority as economist and UP), pathos (irony, contrasts, personal stories), and logos (economic data, cost-effectiveness) – the speech uses rhetorical devices like anaphora and hyperbole to build urgency and emotional resonance. Assertive and directive speech acts convey facts and call for institutional action. Historical references, metaphor (“standing on the shoulders of giants”), and humor ‘humanize’ global health disparities. The message is that basic healthcare is still inaccessible to millions – and universities, with donor support, are key to changing that.

The lecture functions as a sophisticated framing strategy. By tying *global health challenges* (lon-

gevity, disease burden, inequality) to Harvard's mission, Summers positions the *university as a transformative global actor*. Rather than asking for funds directly, he *aligns institutional identity with donor values*, inviting support through a shared vision. Using *ROI language*, the lecture merges fiscal logic with humanitarian purpose, suggesting that investing in Harvard advances innovation, equity, and global health outcomes. It is an indirect yet powerful appeal, urging stakeholders to become strategic partners in shaping a healthier, more just world – through the university as a driver of that change.

Thus, the Dzau Lecture given by the former Harvard President does more than outline the challenges of global health; it mobilizes academic, moral, and financial capital through a carefully layered rhetorical structure. It humanizes data, elevates institutional purpose, and deploys historical consciousness to cultivate a forward-looking, ethically anchored vision. As such, it stands as a paradigmatic example of how university leadership can leverage rhetoric as strategy – aligning facts, values, and narrative to secure long-term support for transformative global initiatives. In an era where universities must justify their relevance to both public and private stakeholders, this address offers a blueprint for how language itself can be a tool of leadership – catalyzing action, legitimizing ambition, and expanding the moral and strategic horizon of higher education. Future research could examine how academic leaders in different cultural contexts use indirect fundraising rhetoric to align moral appeals, institutional vision, and strategy.

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