Donor Recognition Societies

Policy Type: Local  
Responsible Office: Office of Development and Alumni Relations  
Initial Policy Approved: 05/2009  
Current Revision Approved: 6/30/2021

Policy Statement and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and consistent guidelines for the stewardship of university donors through donor recognition societies. These societies honor the university’s generous and loyal donors at all levels through customized communications programs, access to special opportunities and other courtesies. Coordination between universitywide and school and unit-based societies is essential to ensuring the success of all recognition programs. When executed strategically, these societies are designed to elevate donor relationships with the university as well as to attract new donors.

To avoid donor confusion and duplication and to retain unique name recognition, any new donor recognition society must be approved by the vice president for Development and Alumni Relations before it is established. Communications, solicitation and stewardship efforts for universitywide donor recognition societies must be coordinated through the appropriate donor recognition society manager. The university and its affiliated foundations strictly adhere to IRS regulations and Council for Advancement and Support of Education guidelines in terms of offering benefits to members of donor recognition societies.

Noncompliance with this policy could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. VCU supports an environment free from retaliation. Retaliation against any employee who brings forth a good faith concern, asks a clarifying question, or participates in an investigation is prohibited.

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Who Should Know This Policy

All university employees engaged in development and alumni relations activities are responsible for knowing this policy and familiarizing themselves with its contents and provisions.

Definitions

Affiliated or institutionally-related foundations
VCU has affiliated philanthropic foundations that are separate 501(c)(3) charitable corporations organized to operate for the support of the university, while operating with self-governed boards and bylaws. They accept and invest gifts made in support of the university.

CASE
The Council for Advancement and Support of Education is a global nonprofit association dedicated to educational advancement — alumni relations, communications, development, marketing and advancement services — and shares the goal of championing education to transform lives and society.

Gift
A charitable contribution for the use of a qualified organization. It is voluntary and is made without receiving, or expecting to receive, anything of equal value in return.

Gift agreement
A formal document between a donor(s) and a VCU-affiliated foundation. Gift agreements outline the specifics of a gift (i.e. amount, pledge period, criteria) and the donor’s intent.

Donor recognition society
A group of donors with specific giving characteristics or relationships to the university. Inclusion may be determined by amount, designation, gift type and consecutive years of giving as well as affiliation to the university.

Contacts

The Office of Development and Alumni Relations officially interprets this policy. The Office of Development and Alumni Relations is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by the policy Creating and Maintaining Policies and Procedures through the appropriate governance structures. Please direct policy questions to the Office of Development and Alumni Relations’ executive director of Donor Relations and Events.

Policy Specifics and Procedures
The Office of Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) ensures that donor stewardship is coordinated and recorded in the database of record, using gift agreements and other documentation to verify the value of the gift commitment.

**Documented universitywide giving societies**

- **Black and Gold Loyalty Society**: A donor recognition group honoring individuals who have made gifts to the university for five or more consecutive fiscal years. This society is managed by the Office of Annual Giving.
- **Founders' Society**: A donor recognition group honoring individuals who have made cumulative commitments of $100,000 or more to the university or affiliated foundations spanning both the MCV Campus and the Monroe Park Campus. (While commitments may include pledges, the office of donor relations and events will consider membership once significant gifts have been made.) This society is managed by the Office of Donor Relations and Events.
- **Heritage Society**: A donor recognition group honoring individuals who make provisions for units located on the Monroe Park Campus in their estate plans. This society is managed by the Office of Donor Relations and Events.
- **MCV Society**: A donor recognition group honoring individuals who make provisions for MCV Campus schools and units, the VCU Medical Center or the Massey Cancer Center in their estate plans. This society is managed by the MCV Foundation, in coordination with the Office of Donor Relations and Events.
- **President's Club**: A donor recognition group honoring individuals whose gifts total $5,000 or more during one fiscal year. This society is managed by the Office of Donor Relations and Events.
- **VCU Alumni Life Member Society**: A donor recognition group honoring individuals who are lifetime members of the VCU Alumni Association. The Life Member Society is not accepting additional members, and this society is managed by the Office of Alumni Relations.

**Inclusion in donor recognition societies**

- Placement in a society is dependent on data and official gift agreement and receipting documentation in the university's database of record.
- Donor recognition societies may evolve or retire, especially during new campaigns, and those changes will be made public to all members.
- Membership in donor recognition societies may be annulled should the donor's values or reputation, presently or in the future, not align with the values of the university.
- Donor recognition society information will be made public and available to stakeholders at all times, unless anonymity is requested.

Additional donor recognition societies are managed at the school and unit level. All members of a society must be recorded in the database of record.

**Forms**

There are no forms associated with this policy.

**Related Documents**
1. Development and Alumni Relations Activities
2. University Recognition Through Naming
3. Relationships with University-Related Foundations

Revision History

This policy supersedes the following archived policies:

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<tr>
<th>Approval/Revision Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>May 2009</td>
<td>Policy on donor recognition societies</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2013</td>
<td>Policy on donor recognition societies</td>
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FAQ

There are no FAQ associated with this policy.