[DRAFT] Development and Alumni Relations

Policy Type: Administrative
Responsible Office: Office of Development and Alumni Relations
Initial Policy Approved: MM/DD/YYYY
Current Revision Approved: New

Policy Statement and Purpose

The mission of the VCU Office of Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) is to support the vision and future of Virginia Commonwealth University. DAR, as VCU’s centralized fundraising function, supports lifelong relationships with alumni, friends, and organizations that result in volunteer engagement and philanthropic support for the university and its health system. In keeping with this mission, DAR is charged with raising private support to meet institutional needs, as identified by the university. In keeping with shared values that support a donor-centric approach to fundraising and a commitment to and use of a strong prospect management system, VCU has formed a philanthropic partnership with VCU’s development offices within the various schools and units across the university that aligns responsibility for universitywide fundraising and alumni relations endeavors. Central to this partnership is building both trust and transparent communication among the partners, emphasizing the establishment of clear expectations to achieve greater success in fundraising and alumni relations efforts. DAR provides leadership and fundraising services to support the university’s comprehensive fundraising programs that are both centralized and decentralized. Campus-based programs assure close connections between academic priorities and fundraising initiatives. Centralized fundraising and administrative functions provide economies of scale and ensure coordinated donor access through a prospect management system and standardized policies and procedures that ensure integrity across the university, which focuses all efforts in a donor-centric methodology.

DAR is responsible for the overall leadership and management of all fundraising at VCU, in collaboration with individual schools, centers, and units (collectively, “units”) across the university. Any and all philanthropic fundraising activities by any unit on behalf of VCU must be coordinated through the Office of the Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations. All development and alumni relations staff in individual VCU units report to the unit and to the Office of the Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations as described below.

The senior-most staff member responsible for development in the unit serves as the lead development officer (LDO). The LDO is responsible for directing the unit’s comprehensive fundraising program, in collaboration with DAR, with the LDO’s primary emphasis on major and principal level gifts.

This policy supersedes and replaces all memorandums of agreement between DAR and individual schools and units governing the unit’s development and alumni relations activities.
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Who Should Know This Policy

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

Definitions

Many of the below definitions were drawn from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) website (www.case.org).

Advancement
A term used to define the total process of advancing the mission, goals, and objectives of an organization or institution. The process includes development, marketing, communications, alumni affairs (in educational institutions) and advancement services. (Also see “Development”)

Advancement services
A specialty that addresses the “back office” aspects of advancement, such as computer systems, gift regulations and compliance, policies and procedures.

Alumni affairs or alumni relations
In an educational institution, the advancement area responsible for serving as a liaison between the institution and its former students promoting the institution to that constituency.

Annual giving
The yearly act of providing either a restricted or unrestricted gift to the institution, usually in response to an organized appeal.
**Campaign**
An organized effort to raise funds for a nonprofit organization through solicitation by volunteers, direct mail, phone or other organized methods.

**Comprehensive fundraising campaign**
A campaign in which all funds, whether designated for unrestricted, restricted, capital or endowment purposes, are counted toward the goal.

**Constituency**
A category of donors and prospective donors. A constituency could be made up of alumni, parents, or staff members; or in a broader sense, individuals, corporations or foundations.

**Development**
A term used to define the total process of organizational or institutional fundraising. (Also see “Advancement”)

**Donor relations**
An area of development that works with contributors and prospects and oversees cultivation, recognition, and stewardship.

**Foundation**
A foundation is a separate nonprofit entity developed to manage the charitable activities of the university. At VCU there are currently four philanthropic foundations.
- **VCU Foundation:** This foundation works to support the educational and research goals of the units on the Monroe Park Campus and university-wide units.
- **MCV Foundation:** This foundation works to support the educational, clinical and research goals of the units on the MCV Campus.
- **VCU School of Business Foundation:** This foundation works to support the activities at the VCU School of Business.
- **VCU School of Engineering Foundation:** This foundation works to support the activities of the VCU School of Engineering.

**Gift**
A voluntary transfer of things of value in the form of cash, checks, securities, real property or personal property. Gifts can come from individuals, businesses, foundations or other sources. Recipients can use them for unrestricted or restricted purposes, as determined by the donor. Charities make no commitment of resources or services in return for gifts, other than possibly agreeing to put the gift to use as the donor designates.

**Moves management**
A method of organizing donor cultivation that focuses on maintaining a strong, orderly relationship between a donor and the institution. (Also known as “Prospect management”)

**Online services**
These are the online giving and payments, event registrations and e-communications systems for
Development and Alumni Relations. The alumni website and alumni portal operated by the Office of Alumni Relations are delivered through this application.

**Proposal**
A written request or application for a gift or grant that includes why the project or program is needed, who will carry it out and how much it will cost.

**Prospect management**
See “Moves management.”

**Receipt**
A form sent to the donor that confirms a gift has been received and applied toward its designation.

**Restricted gift**
A donation for a specific purpose as clearly stated by the donor, such as donations for academic divisions, athletics, or research.

**Stewardship**
A program of annual reporting to donors that tells how their gifts were used, which often inspires repeat giving.

**Unrestricted gift**
A donation made unconditionally and without any restriction. The reverse of a restricted gift. (Also see “Restricted gift”)

**Contacts**

The Office of Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) officially interprets this policy. DAR 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 vice president for DAR.

**Policy Specifics and Procedures**

The vice president of DAR is the university authority on development practices and principles, reporting to the president and Board of Visitors. Resources to support the fundraising operation are contributed to DAR by university units, institutionally related foundations and the alumni association. The universitywide fundraising structure exists in a hybrid environment, with contributions from both the units and DAR.

**Planning**

- The individual units set development and alumni relations program goals in partnership with the vice president for DAR, or that individual’s designee, using best practice, industry standards, and assessment of portfolio capacity. The unit goals and metrics are codified in an annual operating plan, approved by the unit and DAR.
- DAR provides a set of reporting tools to the unit to assist in tracking and measuring progress.
and accomplishments toward established annual goals and metrics, both at the unit level and for individual fundraising and alumni relations staff.

**DAR Responsibilities**

DAR is responsible for:

- Campaign leadership and overall strategic direction of campaign planning and implementation
- Principal gift level prospect and regional philanthropy strategies
- Annual giving program support, including direct mail, telemarketing services, crowd funding, and email interactions universitywide
- Alumni engagement strategies and programs
- Prospect development and research, including prospect management, portfolios and briefings
- Institutional donor relations and stewardship programs, including events, reporting, and communications
- Donor and alumni communications and online services that are coordinated and branded to reflect the university's mission and strategic priorities
- Corporate and foundation relations fundraising support, including proposal writing and solicitation strategy
- Gift planning
- Alumni, donor, and prospect records through RADAR, the DAR system of record
- Processing, recording and receipting gift transactions, in accordance with university policies and procedures, IRS regulations, and best practices, using the DAR system of record
- Training, professional development and team building for all individuals engaged in fundraising and alumni relations activities across the university
- Database management and system maintenance for the DAR database of record
- Policies and procedures by which all fundraising and alumni relations activities across the university must be conducted
- Recruitment
  - Professional qualifications, responsibilities, and titles for DAR job families are established and maintained by DAR
  - All recruitment for any new development and alumni relations personnel is coordinated by DAR
  - All development and alumni relations positions are established and filled with a candidate mutually acceptable to the dean/director of the unit and the vice president for DAR
- Performance Evaluations
  - Performance issues regarding development and alumni relations staff can be raised by either the unit or DAR and will be resolved based on the mutual agreement of the unit, associated foundation and DAR
  - All one-time bonuses and merit-based increases for development and alumni relations professionals must be mutually evaluated, determined and agreed
Unit and Staff Responsibilities

- All development and alumni relations personnel must adhere to all of the policies and procedures developed, maintained and hosted by DAR. DAR’s local policies and procedures are located on DAR’s local policies website.
- All development and alumni relations staff must use the DAR system of record.
- All development and alumni relations personnel must complete the new hire access request form including the Confidentiality Agreement, as well as complete RADAR 101, DAR orientation, and any other applicable trainings.
- Individual units must provide the office space, equipment and furnishings appropriate to meeting the goals of the unit’s development and alumni relations program.
- Individual units must establish and commit a budget for each fiscal year to provide adequate funding to achieve the unit’s fundraising goal.
- All operating expenses of the development and alumni relations programs for the unit must be reported annually to DAR.

Forms

1. New hire account request form (https://staff.oda.vcu.edu/HelpDesk/Forms/Account)

Related Documents

2. VCU DAR Administrative and Local policies (http://www.support.vcu.edu/policies/)
4. DAR Staff Core Competencies (http://www.support.vcu.edu/media/advsrv-support/files/policies/DARStrategicObjectivesandCoreCompetencies.pdf)

Revision History

This policy supersedes the following archived policies:

None – New policy
FAQ

1. My unit has entered into a memoranda of agreement with DAR that governs how my unit conducts fundraising at VCU. Does this policy supersede/replace that agreement?

   Yes, this policy supersedes all such agreements. On the effective date of this policy, all development and alumni relations activities by any unit across the university are required to be conducted in accordance with this policy.

2. What is the DAR system of record?

   The DAR system of record is called RADAR, which is the central database owned and maintained by DAR used to manage constituent information at VCU. It is an acronym that stands for Rams Advancing Development and Alumni Relations.