[DRAFT] Development and Alumni Relations Activities

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 purpose of this policy is to acknowledge the shared relationships necessary within our centralized-decentralized structure; to provide transparency in governance and clarity of roles and responsibilities regarding university development and alumni activities. The framework outlined herein establishes oversight for assurances and accountability required when undertaking development initiatives.

The Office of Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) supports the mission and future of Virginia Commonwealth University and VCU Health. DAR, as VCU’s centralized fundraising operation (central DAR), supports lifelong relationships with alumni, friends, and organizations that result in volunteer engagement and philanthropic support for the university and its health system. All DAR is charged with raising private support to meet institutional needs, as identified by the university.

To this end, central DAR has formed a philanthropic partnership with the decentralized development offices within the schools and units (unit-based DAR) that aligns responsibility for universitywide fundraising and alumni relations endeavors. Essential to this partnership is building trust and transparent communication, emphasizing the establishment of clear expectations aimed at achieving maximum success in fundraising and alumni relations efforts. Central DAR provides leadership and fundraising services to support the university’s comprehensive fundraising and alumni relations programs. Unit-based DAR programs ensure close connections between academic priorities and fundraising and alumni initiatives. Centralized DAR fundraising and alumni relations functions provide economies of scale and ensure coordinated donor access through a prospect management system and standardized policies and procedures, reinforcing integrity across the university and focusing all efforts in a donor-centric way.

Central DAR is responsible for the overall leadership and management of fundraising and alumni relations at VCU, in collaboration with individual schools, centers, and units (collectively, “units”) across the university. Any and all unit-based DAR activities must be coordinated through central DAR in order to maintain oversight, best practices and quality assurances.

The senior-most personnel responsible for development and alumni engagement in VCU units serve as the Lead Development Officers (LDO). The LDO directs the unit’s comprehensive fundraising, alumni and prospect engagement programs, with the support and partnership of central DAR. The LDO’s primary emphasis is on major and principal-level gifts. Every LDO at VCU reports jointly to their unit and to the
Office of the Vice President for DAR. All development and alumni relations staff in the units either report to or are coordinated by the responsible LDO.

Because VCU-affiliated foundations are separate legal entities from VCU, this policy does not direct or guide those operations, nor does it replace the existing memorandums of agreement between VCU and VCU-affiliated foundations.

Noncompliance with this policy may 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.

Table of Contents

Who Should Know This Policy
Definitions
Contacts
Policy Specifics and Procedures
Forms
Related Documents
Revision History
FAQ

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

Annual Giving
A division of central DAR responsible for solicitation and acquisition of cash gifts under $25,000 that are restricted or unrestricted, usually in response to an annual organized appeal.

Campaign
An organized philanthropic goal over a specific period of time. This is distinctive from annual fundraising.

Development
The process of organizational or institutional fundraising that includes frontline solicitation, marketing, and stewardship as well as the operations to support philanthropic and engagement strategies.
Donor Relations
A division of central DAR responsible for the donor experience through acknowledgement, recognition and stewardship.

Institutionally related foundations (VCU-affiliated)
A separate 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the support of a college, university system, school district or teaching hospital. Their primary purpose is to raise and/or manage private support for the institution with which they are affiliated.

Online services
A division of central DAR responsible for the management of online giving, forms, payments, event registrations and e-communications systems and landing pages. Also includes alumni websites and portals.

Contacts

Central DAR officially interprets this policy and 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 and reports to the president. The universitywide DAR structure exists in a hybrid environment, with collaboration between the unit-based and central DAR. All unit-based and central DAR employees must adhere to policies and procedures that are developed, maintained, and hosted by central DAR.

1. Shared Responsibilities
   ● Recruitment
     ○ Establish and maintain professional qualifications, responsibilities, and titles for unit-based and central DAR job families.
     ○ All LDO, frontline solicitation, and alumni engagement positions are established and filled with a candidate mutually acceptable to the dean/director of the unit and the vice president for DAR
   ● Operating plans
     ○ The individual unit leader sets customized goals in partnership with the vice president for DAR, or the VP’s designee, using best practices, industry standards, and assessment of portfolio capacity. The unit goals and metrics, adjusted based on additional responsibilities assigned to unit-based DAR employees, are outlined in an annual operating and evaluation plan. These plans are vetted and established by the unit and central DAR.
     ○ Central DAR provides reporting tools to assist in metric tracking toward meeting prior established goals at the unit level and for central DAR employees.
   ● Performance evaluations
     ○ Performance issues may be raised by either the unit or central DAR and will be
resolved mutually.

- Central DAR provides input regarding best practices and adjusts expectations, goals and metrics based on resources allocated by the unit.
  - Bonuses and raises for unit-based LDO’s and frontline solicitation personnel are mutually evaluated, determined and agreed upon by the unit and central DAR; this provides consistency and equity considerations aligned with university talent management best practices.

- All unit-based and central DAR employees must use the central DAR system of record for tracking any fundraising and engagement strategies.
- Units, in consultation with the vice president of DAR, will commit a fiscal year budget to support the approved operating plans, based on best practices scaled to the capacity and commitment of the unit.

2. Central DAR responsibilities

- Campaign leadership and overall strategic direction of campaign planning and implementation.
- Principal gift-level prospect and regional philanthropy strategies.
- Annual Giving operations support, including direct mail, telemarketing services, crowdfunding, and email interactions universitywide.
- Alumni engagement strategies and program support.
- Prospect development and research, including prospect management, portfolios and briefings.
- DAR communications and online services that are coordinated and branded to reflect the university’s mission and strategic priorities.
- Corporate and foundation fundraising, including proposal coordination, writing and solicitation strategy.
- Gift planning support, including strategy, coordination and solicitation.
- Universitywide donor relations programs including recognition, events, reporting and communications.
- Alumni, donor, constituent and prospect records.
- Processing, recording and receipting gift transactions, in accordance with university policy and IRS regulations.
- Skills-based training, professional development and team effectiveness training for individuals engaged in DAR activities across the university.
- Database management and information systems maintenance.

3. Unit and unit-based DAR employee responsibilities

- In keeping with the goals of efficiency and effectiveness, units must collaborate and coordinate when delegated with authority and accountability for central DAR responsibilities.
- Units must provide office space, equipment and furnishings required to meet the goals of the unit’s DAR operating plan.
- Unit fundraisers are responsible for coordination with faculty, staff, and students on non-fundraising efforts (research, polls, surveys, events, announcements, etc.) that would
require access to or information from the database of record.

- Unit fundraisers are the first point of contact for all fundraising and engagement efforts within those units and serve as the subject matter experts for their unit.

### Forms

1. Operating plan
   (https://staff.oda.vcu.edu/intranet/media/ADVSRV/dar/files/FY18OpPlanTemplate.pdf)

### Related Documents

1. VCU DAR Administrative and Local policies (http://www.support.vcu.edu/policies/)
   (Policy categories include: annual giving, central DAR policies, communications, corporate and foundation relations, donor relations, gifts and records management, IT and support services, and online services)

2. DAR Code of Ethics
   (http://www.support.vcu.edu/media/advsrv/intranet/files/documents/Policy_on_Development_and_Alumni_Relations_code_of_ethics.pdf)

3. 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 a memorandum 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 DAR activities by any unit across the university must be conducted in accordance with this policy.

2. **What is the DAR system of record?**

   The DAR system of record is the central database application owned and maintained by the university to manage constituent information and donor-centered relationships. All data within this application is the property of the university.

3. **What if my unit has its own alumni programs?**
Central DAR is responsible for the coordination and delivery of universitywide alumni programs. In some cases, VCU Alumni delegates to and partners with units that have established practices.