
BUSINESS POLICY

TO: All Members of the University Community 2013:07

DATE: July 2013

Ferris State University Policy on Prioritization and Coordination of University Fundraising Activities

Section 1 – Policy Statement

University Advancement and Marketing (UA&M) is responsible for administering and coordinating all institutionally-endorsed fundraising campaigns, significant gift solicitations and acceptance of gifts on behalf of the University and The Ferris Foundation. UA&M acknowledges the efforts of administrators, faculty, staff and volunteers (i.e., Alumni and Foundation Boards, fundraising steering committees/advisory boards) who may have a desire to solicit financial support from the private sector to meet needs not being funded from other sources. This policy is intended to help guide those who are interested in initiating fundraising and solicitation activities with external sources, working in collaboration with UA&M.

In particular, this policy applies to all cultivation and solicitation activities conducted on behalf of Ferris State University for charitable gifts of any sort (i.e., securities, real or personal property, planned or deferred gifts, gifts-in-kind) sought from individuals, businesses, corporations, foundations and organizations.

Section 2 – Objective

The Ferris State University Policy on Coordination and Prioritization of University Fundraising Activities is to ensure that Ferris State University's external fundraising efforts:

- A. Are well coordinated, acknowledging that many donors view solicitations from various University entities as all coming from the University and/or influencing their overall support of the University;
- B. Promote an environment in which information is shared among all interested parties and solicitation strategies are developed mindfully so individuals and entities do not receive repeated and uncoordinated requests for support;
- C. Result in maximum charitable support aligned with University priorities;

- D. Are pre-approved as fundraising priorities by appropriate University academic and administrative leadership to ensure that they are consistent with the University's mission and enable UA&M to provide effective support (assistance with cultivation and solicitation, donor research, stewardship and recognition of gifts) for the University's highest funding needs; and
- E. Adhere to approved fundraising ethics and philosophy as outlined in the [Donor Bill of Rights](#) and [CASE Statement of Ethics](#).

Section 3 – Policy

- A. **The Process for Identifying and Establishing University Fundraising Priorities:** To ensure that fundraising at the University is conducted in a focused, strategic and coordinated manner, there is an established process for submitting major fundraising plans and individual solicitations for approval as a priority at the College/Unit and/or University level. No organized fundraising effort appealing to various Ferris State University constituencies (i.e., alumni, friends, parents) can begin without being pre-approved by appropriate academic and administrative leadership by means of a [Fundraising Priority Request form](#). Requestors will be asked to include the purpose of the fundraising campaign and case for support; how the proposal aligns with the College/Unit and University priorities; specific objectives and financial goal; expected timeline; and a list of prospects and volunteers (if known). This process makes certain that externally funded initiatives are of high quality, serve the University's top priorities and requests to potential donors bear the University's endorsement.

Requests for Priority-Setting for Initiatives Requiring Private Support of \$100,000 or less

Fundraising proposals requiring private support of *\$100,000 or less* must have the written endorsement of the **Dean/Unit Director** before pursuing and should be managed at the departmental level if approved. UA&M serves as a resource to departments, providing guidance and strategy on the effective cultivation and solicitation of donors. They offer assistance with fundraising proposal submissions as they are being developed and after they are approved by identifying and qualifying prospects, making approaches and providing training and other useful information.

Requests for Priority-Setting for Initiatives Requiring Private Support of \$100,000 or more

Fundraising plans requiring private support of *\$100,000 or more* must have the written endorsement of the **Dean/Unit Director, Provost and/or divisional Vice President, Vice President for UA&M and President**. Approved fundraising plans of this scope are designated as the highest institutional priorities requiring a centrally managed effort by UA&M.

Proposals can be submitted for review and approval as a priority at any time throughout the year. Requests that are not deemed a priority, at any stage of the approval process, will be returned to the initiator and must include justification for being turned down and other useful comments. See tips on “[Making Your Proposal a Priority](#)” and “[How to Work with the Advancement Office](#)” once a fundraising proposal is approved as a priority.

B. Relationship Management and Prospect Coordination Procedure:

Anytime faculty members or other members of the University community are involved in cultivating and soliciting gifts they should first make their dean/unit director aware of their activities. If the amount of the gift sought is \$10,000 or more, they also must coordinate their donor outreach with the UA&M Vice President or his/her designee, who can help identify whether someone else at the University is already working with a current or prospective donor so that duplicate requests to that donor are avoided and that one solicitation does not jeopardize another that may have greater value to the University as a whole. Communicating plans to contact a donor(s) also allows UA&M to document that activity in its alumni/donor data base so there is an official record of planned fundraising activity. In most instances, a phone call or email to the UA&M Vice President/designee to discuss a prospect or plan for soliciting funds can resolve any questions.

C. Special Considerations:

Gifts-in-kind

Gifts-in-kind are non-monetary items of tangible property such as equipment, machinery, automobiles, art, collectibles, books and other personal assets that represent value to Ferris State University.

While it is frequent and encouraged practice for faculty members, in particular, to seek in-kind gifts such as equipment for their departments, they must ensure, prior to making the ask, that their deans/unit director will approve the acceptance of the in-kind gift since consideration needs to be given to the cost of accepting the gift, the long-term viability of the gift and the resale market if the gift is to be sold.

Department or program in-kind donations are to be reported using a [Notice of Receipt of an In-Kind Donation form](#) that is to be submitted promptly to UA&M for official University acceptance and acknowledgment. [Click here for more information on gifts-in-kind and other types of gifts.](#)

Outreach to Corporations and Private Foundations

Funding, particularly when received from a non-profit entity (i.e., foundation, corporate foundation, private organization or corporation) is sometimes difficult to classify as a gift or grant since the terms are used synonymously for private funders to describe the type of support they provide.

Proposals to **public** funding sources (government agencies) and **private funders** whose agreements have *contractual obligations* are classified as “grants” and are handled by the Provost’s Office of Academic Research. More precisely, “grant agreements” specify how the funds should be used; require performance of duties such as research, budget and progress reports; typically require a specific time period for conducting projects; may require return of unused funds; and may result in overhead or indirect costs.

Proposals to **private** funding sources whose agreements do **not** have any contractual requirements or formal fiscal accountability and the funds are considered “charitable” under IRS federal tax law are designated as “gifts” are handled by UA&M’s Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations.

If a funding proposal’s conditions constitute both a gift and grant, then the Offices of Academic Research (OAR) and Corporate and Foundation Relations (CFR) will coordinate efforts to ensure that the donor’s/sponsor’s intent is honored.

To avoid conflicts of interest within the University, individuals should contact OAR if support is sought for grant or sponsored activities that have specific reporting and budgetary requirements, or CFR if private gift support is sought.

Solicitation of Local Businesses

It is not necessary for employees, students, volunteers or athletics seeking modest gift requests, most likely in the form of gifts-in-kind or sponsorships, to seek formal approval from UA&M before soliciting local businesses. However, if planned activities are communicated with UA&M in advance, they may be able to share what entities have already been contacted by campus groups (if known), preventing business owners from becoming frustrated by receiving multiple requests from Ferris representatives. The Center for Leadership Activities and Career Services (CLACS) requires Registered Student Organizations to submit a registration form for any fundraiser an RSO sponsors on or off campus. The Director of CLACS must inform the UA&M Vice President/designee of off-campus fundraising by students to ensure effective coordination.

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