

# Student Group Guides: FUNDRAISING, SPONSORSHIPS & CHARITABLE DONATIONS

## Fundraising & Sponsorships from External Entities

Penn relies on the financial support of alumni, parents, organizations and friends to fulfill its educational mission. Maintaining strong relationships throughout the Penn community is critical to sustaining this ongoing support. Penn will institute policies and procedures as appropriate to ensure that all contacts between the University and its constituents reflect this commitment, and that all fundraising on behalf of Penn is coordinated and reflects the mission of the University.

### General Guidance on Sponsorships

Before pursuing or negotiating any potential sponsorships, you must first be sure there are no contractual conflicts that would prohibit an official sponsorship or partnership with the University. Groups are encouraged to work with their advisors, the Office of Student Affairs, or the Grad Center to confirm that there are no potential issues with the specific sponsor and general type of sponsorship.

**No explicit agreement or contract should be negotiated or signed by your group if there is a financial or quid-pro-quo component to the agreement.** Discussions of sponsorship should include University staff, whether group advisors or financial administrators, and all formal agreements must be signed by the appropriate administrators. In addition, **recognized student groups approved to use Penn branding may not explicitly endorse the use of any consumer product to students** via your official social media or communications.

Groups may accept Corporate Sponsorship when the business is a) providing a good that will be used as part of an activity hosted by the group (ex. A beverage that is distributed at an event hosted by the group), b) paying directly for advertising space as part of an event (ex. Securing ad space is a program), and c) paying for a specific expense related to a mission-based activity of the group (ex. Paying for the food being provided for a conference).

Groups may NOT accept corporate sponsorship if the payment (including goods and services) is linked to an advertising request the company is asking the group to make. This could include but is not limited to, providing a one-time payment for a group to advertise a product/business on social media and providing discounts to a student group if they direct business to their account (ex. Pushing rideshare discounts).

## University Student Group Fundraising Policy

The Vice Provost for University Life (“VPUL”) has oversight for the Office of Student Affairs (“OSA”) and all student group functions. VPUL is responsible for determining which organizations are officially-sanctioned student groups and therefore are eligible to fundraise under this policy.

The Office of Development and Alumni Relations (“DAR”) is responsible for leading and coordinating fundraising for the University and therefore determines which Penn entities may actively fundraise within the Penn community and how that fundraising must be conducted.

Student groups that wish to solicit philanthropic support from members of the Penn community (including alumni and parents) must adhere to all requirements of this fundraising policy. These guidelines allow Penn to coordinate the variety of contacts that alumni, parents and friends can receive from the University. This prevents community members from becoming annoyed by a barrage of requests. It is unlikely that a student group will receive donations from people who are overcome by requests.

### I. Definition of Fundraising

- A. This policy refers to all of the below:
  1. Fundraising from members of the Penn community, specifically alumni and parents, as well as individuals and organizations with existing relationships with Penn.
  2. Fundraising that falls under Penn’s 501(c)3 status as a non-profit organization, whereby contributions may qualify for the federal charitable tax deduction.
  3. Fundraising that results in gifts that are processed through DAR and administered through the OSA student group budget process
- B. This policy does not refer to:
  1. Activities such as bake sales or event ticket sales where the proceeds are not eligible for federal charitable tax deduction.
  2. Activities that raise funds for other organizations (i.e., an event to raise money for Habitat for Humanity, Hillel, Newman Center, etc.).
  3. Activities that are designed to raise funds for a purpose that the OSA does not deem charitable.

## II. Criteria to Qualify for Fundraising

- A. A student group must meet all of the following conditions<sup>\*</sup>:
  1. Must be recognized by the Student Activities Council ("SAC"; undergraduates) or GFAC (graduate groups).
  2. Has been in existence for at least five consecutive years.
  3. Does not have a national affiliate that is a 501(c)(3) organization.
  4. Has a center or department affiliation or a primary governing board.
  5. Has a university account.
  6. OSA has determined that existing resources are not available.
- B. The student group's request for fundraising must be reviewed and approved by OSA, VPUL and DAR. **See Section V for more information.**
- C. The group must agree to all DAR and OSA policies regarding fundraising and fund administration.

*\*Groups that meet some but not all criteria may have other ways to raise funds and should seek guidance from OSA.*

## III. Requesting Approval for Fundraising

- A. A student group must submit a proposal in writing to OSA.
  1. The proposal must be submitted three months before fundraising is to commence.
  2. The proposal must include the following: purpose of the fundraising, dollar goal, target audience, names of students who are responsible for the fundraising.
  3. The purpose of the fundraising must be tied to the student group's priorities and mission.
- B. OSA is responsible for determining if a request meets the criteria of this policy.
- C. OSA will identify for DAR those groups who receive their support for fundraising
- D. OSA and DAR will make final determination to grant approval.

## IV. Rules for Fundraising for Approved Student Group Requests

- A. All solicitation lists must be approved by DAR before fundraising commences.
- B. Student groups may contact alumni who were members of their group, and parents of current and past members with prior approval from DAR.
- C. DAR reserves the right to exclude certain alumni or

parents from a solicitation list, including all Trustees and Overseers, and anyone who has requested to be removed from solicitation or contact lists.

- D. Student groups who wish to contact corporations or foundations must receive additional approval from DAR.
- E. Student groups may solicit gifts via direct mail or email. In-person or telephone solicitations are not permitted.
- F. All solicitation materials, including emails, letters, web sites, and social media appeals must be approved by DAR in advance.
- G. Student groups are responsible for all costs related to fundraising. DAR can provide an estimate upon request.
- H. All gifts will be administered through DAR Gifts Administration and will be directed to the appropriate gift fund.
- I. The student group must alert DAR to any responses it receives directly as a result of a solicitation.

## V. Rules for Managing a University Gift Fund Held by OSA

- A. Funds must be spent for the charitable purpose(s) specified in the student group's application.
- B. Funds must be spent in a manner consistent with OSA student group guidelines.

## VI. Fundraising Process for Approved Projects

- A. If approved, student group leaders will work with appropriate staff in OSA, VPUL and DAR to execute and coordinate fundraising.
- B. These offices will provide:
  1. Coordination with DAR, OSA, VPUL and others
  2. Guidance on fundraising strategies
  3. Oversight for prospect lists
  4. Assistance with operational questions

## VII. Non-Adherence to Policy

- A. A student group that does not adhere to all aspects of this policy will be prohibited from fundraising for eighteen months.
- B. Individual students may receive additional sanctions through the non-academic disciplinary system as administered by VPUL for violations of the operational rules of an office of the University.

## Fundraising for Outside Charities and Groups

In accordance with University finance policies, student groups may not make charitable donations from the student group to outside charities.

Groups seeking to conduct fundraisers or coordinate donations for an outside charity must consult with OSA and receive advance written approval to ensure

compliance with government and University policies on charitable donations.

More information can be found at [osa.universitylife.upenn.edu/fsc](http://osa.universitylife.upenn.edu/fsc) and [gsc.upenn.edu/resources/graduate-student-groups](http://gsc.upenn.edu/resources/graduate-student-groups)