



FOR INFORMATION

PUBLIC

OPEN SESSION

TO: Business Board

SPONSOR: David Palmer, Vice-President, Advancement
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PRESENTER: David Palmer, Vice-President, Advancement

CONTACT INFO: See Sponsor

DATE: September 18, 2025 for September 25, 2025

AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Provostial Guidelines on Gift Acceptance and Gift Administration

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

Section 5.5(c) of the of the Business Board terms of reference delegates to the President or designate “approval of strategies and policies concerning the general conduct of fundraising; and approval of policies on the receipt, acknowledgement and use of gifts and bequests”

GOVERNANCE PATH:

- 1. Business Board [for information] (September 25, 2025)**

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

n/a

HIGHLIGHTS:

The University of Toronto has a strong and robust framework of donation policies, guidelines, and practices, generally at the top of the profession and on par with, if not stronger than, high-performing peer institutions. As the core of this framework is the *Provostial Guidelines on Donations (est. 1998; revised 2021)* and the *Guidelines on Fundraising Strategy and Programs (est. 2003; revised 2023)*, which together ensure

strong protections for academic autonomy and respect for academic processes in all aspects of fundraising and giving at U of T.

The *Provostial Guidelines on Gift Acceptance and Gift Administration* is a new addition to this framework. These *Guidelines* collect and describe a number of existing and new operational considerations for the acceptance and administration of donations, including those pertaining to anonymous and corporate giving, and are being shared with the Business Board for informational purposes.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

n/a

RECOMMENDATION:

For information.

DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED:

- *Provostial Guidelines on Gift Acceptance and Gift Administration*

Provostial Guidelines on Gift Acceptance and Gift Administration

[Planning & Policy](#) / Gift Acceptance and Gift Administration, Provostial Guidelines on

July 31, 2025

Throughout the University of Toronto's history, alumni, friends, corporations and foundations have generously sustained and strengthened the university's research and teaching mission in countless ways. Philanthropic gifts are vital to creating life-changing opportunities for students, advancing essential discovery and knowledge and fueling innovation for a better future.

At the University of Toronto, all fundraising and resulting donations, including the processes for accepting and administering these gifts, are subject to the university's core academic principles and values as expressed in the [University of Toronto Statement of Institutional Purpose](#) (1992), the university's [Statement on Freedom of Speech](#) and in article 5 of the [Memorandum of Agreement between The Governing Council of the University of Toronto and the University of Toronto Faculty Association](#). Further, these donations are also subject to the principles articulated in the university's [Statement on Research Partnerships](#) for philanthropic research gifts or grants, and in the university's [Procedures for the Human Rights Review of International Projects, Agreements, and Other International Activity](#) for donations from international donors or for international projects.

The *Provostial Guidelines on Gift Acceptance and Gift Administration* set out the parameters for the university's acceptance of donations and the subsequent administration of gifts. These align with the university's principles and values, as well as the [Provostial Guidelines on Donations](#) and the [Guidelines on Fundraising Strategy and Programs](#).

The *Provostial Guidelines on Gift Acceptance and Gift Administration* uphold the university's principles and policies in all aspects of gift solicitation and acceptance. They highlight the importance of due diligence and conflict of interest review, gift agreement requirements, parameters for recognition and anonymity and governance and public disclosure standards.

1. Gift Acceptance

- 1.1. [Adherence to approved academic priorities](#). In accordance with the [Provostial Guidelines on Donations](#), the Division of University Advancement ("DUA") may only raise funds for approved academic priorities of the University of Toronto, as defined by academic leadership through well-established and respected academic planning and approval processes.

- 1.2. Accepting or declining gifts. The [Provostial Guidelines on Donations](#) also state that the university “values and will protect its integrity, autonomy, and academic freedom, and does not accept gifts when a condition of such acceptance would compromise these fundamental principles.” As a result, the university may decide to accept or decline any gift. When the university deems a gift or its terms unacceptable, the Vice-President, Advancement or designate will decline the gift or request revisions to align with university policies and principles.
- 1.3. Gifts requiring gift agreements. All gifts of \$50,000 or more require a formal gift agreement to be signed by the donor and the Vice-President, Advancement in accordance with these *Guidelines*. For greater clarity, gifts are herein defined as major gifts or grants of a philanthropic nature, gifts-in-kind, or sponsorships, valued at \$50,000 or more.¹
- 1.4. Review and compliance. Before accepting any gift, the Office of the Counsel, Advancement (the “Counsel’s office”) will review the gift’s terms and conditions to ensure compliance with university policy and alignment with the university’s financial management and investment practices. Confirmation from the Counsel’s office that the gift conforms to university policy is required for all gift agreements prior to acceptance and signing.
- 1.5. Donor recognition. The university welcomes the opportunity to recognize the generosity of its donors through namings, invitations to university events and meetings, expressions of appreciation of a nominal nature and published recognition—all in accordance with the university’s [Policy on Naming](#) and Canada Revenue Agency regulations.
- 1.6. Donation receipt. The university will provide a receipt for income tax purposes or a gift acknowledgement receipt to the donor with respect to each gift payment in accordance with Canada Revenue Agency regulations.
- 1.7. No implied endorsement. The acceptance of a gift does not imply that the university endorses a donor’s opinions, a partisan political or ideological position or a commercial product or business.
- 1.8. No donor benefit. Accepting a gift must not confer any advantage to the donor, nor does it permit any influence from the donor concerning any aspect of the university’s operations or academic matters, including appointments, admissions, or procurement.
- 1.9. No return of gift. Once a gift has been paid to the university, the donor will not have any right to have the amount of such payment or any part thereof or income therefrom returned or paid to or for the donor’s benefit in any circumstance whatsoever, with each payment constituting an irrevocable transfer to the university and a donation for the purposes of the *Income Tax Act* (Canada).

¹ Gifts below \$50,000 to existing funds do not require gift agreements, as they are generally solicited through the annual fund in mass appeals.

2. Due Diligence and Conflict of Interest

- 2.1. Requirement for due diligence. Before soliciting and accepting a gift, the Division of University Advancement will perform due diligence and assess potential reputational or material risks related to the donor or the gift's conditions. The DUA will internally review the prospective donor's affiliations, funding sources and any potential conflicts of interest.
- 2.2. Gift administrative committee. If during the process of review, the terms, conditions, or circumstances related to a gift or a donor require further consultation, the Counsel's office may choose to convene an *ad hoc* gift administrative committee to review the gift and recommend acceptance, revision or rejection. The committee will submit this recommendation to the Vice-President, Advancement and the Provost's Office for approval.

For additional clarity, the Vice-President, Advancement or the Counsel may convene such a committee when gifts or donors: (i) present unique, unusual or special circumstances; (ii) represent a potential material risk to the university; or (iii) represent a potential reputational risk to the university. The Counsel may assemble a committee with members from the Division of University Advancement, Provost's Office and relevant divisional leadership to review and provide guidance. In exceptional circumstances, if further consultation is needed, the Vice-President, Advancement may choose to bring a recommendation to the Governing Council for consideration and approval in accordance with the [*Business Board Terms of Reference*](#).

3. Gift Agreements

- 3.1. Purpose of gift agreements. Gift agreements provide donors and the university with a mutual understanding of the gift's intent and purpose and serve as a reference for its proper administration and use. Each agreement includes a standard clause that affirms the university's commitment to academic freedom, institutional autonomy and integrity.
- 3.2. Requirement for signed gift agreements. The university requires signed gift agreements for all gifts of \$50,000 or more, as defined in section 1.3. The donor, appropriate university representatives and the Vice-President, Advancement or delegate must sign the agreement in accordance with the [*Policy on Approval and Execution of Contracts and Documents*](#).
- 3.3. Purchase orders and invoices. A formal gift agreement is required for all gifts, including corporate and foundation gifts. The university does not permit corporate purchase orders or invoices to replace a formal gift agreement. Purchase orders and invoices may facilitate payment as needed, but only after completing a signed gift agreement.

- 3.4. Policy and guideline references. Gift agreements will explicitly reference all relevant university policies and guidelines related to the gift's designation(s), as outlined in the appendix below. For example, gift agreements that reference namings in recognition of benefactors will include a standard clause confirming that all namings will follow the university's [*Policy on Naming*](#).
- 3.5. Disclosure. Gift agreements will include a standard clause for donors to consent to public disclosure and recognition of their gift. For gifts of \$250,000 and more, the gift agreement will also confirm that the gift will be publicly disclosed in the context of governance reporting requirements, as outlined in the Governance and Public Disclosure section below.
- 3.6. Anonymity. Gift agreements in which an individual or family foundation donor has requested anonymity will include a standard clause that defines the nature and extent of anonymity requirements, including any disclosure obligations. All conditions of anonymity must comply with relevant university policies and receive approval from the Counsel's office before accepting the gift. The terms and conditions regarding anonymity will follow the processes outlined in the Anonymity and Governance and Public Disclosure sections below.
- 3.7. Amendments to gift agreements or changes to gift implementation. The university may occasionally wish to amend the conditions of a signed and accepted gift or alter how a gift is implemented. In such cases, the Counsel's office must approve any proposed amendments or changes. If the changes are material, the Counsel's office will document those changes in writing and ensure they are confirmed with the donor through a signed addendum to the original gift agreement. Such addenda are subject to the same policies, guidelines and considerations as the original gift agreements.

4. Anonymity

- 4.1. Anonymous gifts. The university typically recognizes donors publicly and gratefully for their generosity, which often inspires others to give. However, individual or family foundation donors may sometimes prefer to keep their giving anonymous. The university will respect the wishes of donors requesting anonymity, providing the conditions of anonymity are in accordance with these *Guidelines*.
- 4.2. Limitations on anonymity. The university requires public disclosure of all philanthropic donations made by corporations or by their affiliates, such as corporate foundations. The university will not accept such donations on a condition of anonymity.
- 4.3. Conditions of anonymity. Prior to the closure of a gift, the university and donor will openly discuss the conditions around anonymity and review these with the Counsel's office for approval.

- 4.4. Standard clause on anonymity. All gift agreements for anonymous gifts will include a standard clause outlining the requirements for anonymity. Donors wishing to give anonymously must complete a form to specify their preferred level of anonymity, as outlined below.
- 4.5. Levels of anonymity. When a donor requests anonymity, their expectations will be explicitly clarified and codified in a signed gift agreement based on one of the following three levels:
- (i) Anonymous gift – A donor recognized publicly for most of their giving may request anonymity for a specific gift. In this case, the gift will be coded as anonymous on the university’s donations database, and the donor’s name will only be known internally to those involved with the gift and staff with access to the database. However, the donor’s name will not appear in publications, donor listings, including regular reports to governance, or public announcements in relation to the gift. All public recognition of the gift itself will recognize the gift as from an “Anonymous Donor”.
 - (ii) Anonymous donor – A donor may request complete anonymity for all of their giving. At this level, the donor will be coded as an anonymous donor on the university’s database, and the donor’s name will only be known internally to those involved with the gift and staff with access to the database. However, the donor’s name will not appear in any publications, donor listings or public announcements for any of their giving. All public recognition of the donor’s gifts will recognize the donor as an “Anonymous Donor”.
 - (iii) Institutionally anonymous donor – In rare and special circumstances, a donor may request to be institutionally anonymous. In such cases, the university’s Counsel and the Vice-President, Advancement will approve and confirm this request in writing. The President, the Vice-President, Advancement and the Counsel’s office will be informed of the donor’s identity. The gift will be coded on a constituent record that does not disclose the identity of the donor internally. The donor’s name will not appear in publications, donor listings or public announcements. All public recognition will recognize the donor as an “Anonymous Donor”.

5. Governance and Public Disclosure

- 5.1. Governance disclosure. In accordance with the [*Provostial Guidelines on Donations*](#), the Vice-President, Advancement will submit a list of all donations of \$250,000 or more to the university’s Business Board and Academic Board in open session on a quarterly basis. The gift agreement will include a standard clause confirming that the gift will be publicly disclosed in the context of governance reporting requirements for all gifts of \$250,000 or over.

- 5.2. Anonymous donors and governance disclosure. Gifts requiring anonymity will follow the process outlined in the Anonymity section above. For governance disclosure, the donor will be listed as an “Anonymous Donor”. Upon request, the identity of the anonymous donor may be provided verbally and confidentially to the Business Board and Academic Board *in camera*. The university will not include the name of an anonymous donor in the meeting minutes nor disclose it publicly.
- 5.3. Applicable laws. The university will comply with all applicable laws. The terms and conditions governing the use of donations are matters of public record, except for personal or proprietary information, per the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Appendix A: Relevant Policies and Statements

The following University of Toronto policies and statements, which are referenced in these guidelines, may be obtained from the Office of the Governing Council, Simcoe Hall, University of Toronto.

Academic Freedom

[University of Toronto Statement of Institutional Purpose](#)

[University of Toronto Statement on Freedom of Speech](#)

[Memorandum of Agreement between The Governing Council of the University of Toronto and the University of Toronto Faculty Association](#)

Guidelines and Statements

[Provostial Guidelines on Donations](#)

[Provost's Statement on the Role of Advisory Bodies](#)

[Guidelines on Fundraising Strategy and Programs](#)

[Provost's Guidelines on Use of Divisional Operating Reserves for the Purpose of Matching New Donor Gifts](#)

[Guideline for the Administration of Financial Prizes for Entrepreneurs and Startup Companies](#)

[Statement on Research Partnerships](#)

[Statement on Prohibited Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment](#)

Appointments

[Policy and Procedures on Academic Appointments](#)

[Policies for Librarians](#)

[Policy for Clinical Faculty](#)

[Policy and Procedures on Employment Conditions of Part-time Faculty](#)

[Policies for Professional/Managerial Staff](#)

[Policies for Confidentials](#)

[Policies for Senior Research Associates & Research Associates \(Limited Term\)](#)

[Policy on Appointment of Academic Administrators](#)

[Policy on Endowed and Limited Term Chairs, Professorships, Distinguished Scholars and Program Initiatives](#)

[Provost's Guidelines for the Selection and Approval of Named Chair Appointments](#) issued as PDAD&C #052, 1995-96 on June 25, 1996

Human Rights

[Statement on Human Rights](#)

[Procedures for the Human Rights Review of International Projects, Agreements, and Other International Activity](#)

Naming

[Policy on Naming](#)

Conflict of Interest

[Statement on Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment](#)
[Policy on Conflict of Interest – Academic Staff](#)
[Policy on Conflict of Interest – Librarians](#)

Student Awards

[Policy on Student Awards](#)

Financial

[Long-Term Capital Appreciation Pool Policy](#)

[Policy for the Preservation of Capital of Endowment Funds](#)

[Guide to Financial Management](#)

Capital Projects

[Policy on Capital Planning & Capital Projects](#)

Contracts

[Policy on Approval and Execution of Contracts and Documents](#)

[Provostial Guideline for Academic Divisions on Contracts](#)

Privacy

[Statement Regarding Access to Information and Protection of Privacy](#)