



Applies to: Faculty, staff, students, and donors to The Ohio State University and The Ohio State University Foundation

Responsible Office

University Advancement

POLICY

Issued: 1992
Revised: 07/01/2020

The Ohio State University names entities and spaces in recognition of philanthropic contributions, to honor service or commitment to the university, and for administrative purposes. This policy governs the **naming** of a **space** on university-owned or university-leased property, as well as the naming of a university **entity**. The policy is designed to help foster positive recognition of individuals and organizations while also protecting the university’s integrity and reputation.

Purpose of the Policy

To provide guidance on the creation and utilization of finite naming opportunities.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Current use funds	Funds that are intended to be spent in the current operating cycle.
Endowment funds	Funds that are invested and have been permanently restricted by the donor to be used in perpetuity, with annual distributions to be used as prescribed by the donor.
Entity	A college, school, department, division, institute, center, or program which has defined leadership and resources supporting it.
Naming	Formal assignment of a specific name to a university space or entity.
Administrative naming	A formal assignment of a specific name related to the function or location of a space or entity (e.g., Eighteenth Avenue Library) that is unrelated to a philanthropic gift or honorific recognition.
Honorific naming	A formal assignment of a specific name to recognize a distinguished individual or organization for outstanding service or commitment to the university that may or may not involve a philanthropic gift (e.g., Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium).
Philanthropic naming	A formal assignment of a specific name to express appreciation for a philanthropic gift from an individual or an organization (e.g., The Max M. Fisher College of Business).
Space	A defined physical area or structure such as a building, interior room, outdoor area, features (e.g., fountains), or objects (e.g., lockers). The name given to a construction project to renovate or create a new space is separate from the naming of the space itself and outside the scope of this policy.
Unit	College or administrative unit.
Unit leader	Head of college or administrative unit (e.g., dean, senior vice president, president, provost).

Policy Details

- I. The university will commit to name an entity or space only after carefully considering all relevant factors, including the potential impact the naming will have on the university and the campus community and consistency with university tradition, mission, and policy.
- II. Review and Approval Authority
 - A. The President’s Cabinet must review and approve all naming requests prior to detailed gift discussion with prospective donors or honorees.
 - B. The Gift Acceptance Committee also must review **philanthropic namings** of colleges or schools, namings of spaces in recognition of corporations involving external signage or major internal spaces, and other complex



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namings at the discretion of the senior vice president for Advancement prior to detailed gift discussion with prospective donors. Pursuant to the [Gift Acceptance policy](#), the senior vice president for Advancement convenes the Gift Acceptance Committee.

- C. The university Board of Trustees has final review and approval authority for all namings, consistent with section 3335-1-08(D) of the Ohio Administrative Code.

III. Gifts and Recognition

- A. Gifts to name spaces should be outright cash gifts or pledges when such gifts are part of a funding plan associated with renovation or construction of a space. (See the [Gift Acceptance policy](#) for definitions of cash gifts and pledges.) Spaces may be named in recognition of other types of gifts at the discretion of the senior vice president for Advancement. Spaces named in recognition of a donor may be limited to a set length of time or term documented in the gift instrument.
- B. Entities will generally be named only in recognition of donors who provide **endowment funds** to establish or enhance and maintain the entity throughout its existence. In some instances, the university may consider offering naming recognition for a specified term to donors who provide **current use funds** in support of an entity.
- C. Those being recognized with a naming must have a positive image and demonstrated integrity.
- D. All signage reflecting the naming of a space or entity must conform to [University Signage Standards](#) and may not include a logo or other components of the donor's branding.
- E. In naming an entity or space, it is understood that such recognition does not constitute "ownership" or decision-making authority over the entity or space. Decisions made regarding the utilization and design of the facility or programmatic direction of the entity will be made solely by the university.

IV. Revision or Removal

- A. The university is committed to retaining the name of a space or entity for its useful life or as otherwise provided for in a gift agreement and/or Board of Trustees resolution.
- B. In the event the space or entity is relocated, reorganized, or repurposed, the university will make reasonable attempts to notify the donor of the change and consider implications for recognition. The university may also dispose of any named space, via sale, demolition, renovation, or otherwise, at any time and at its sole discretion in accordance with the [Board of Trustees Review and Approval of Facilities Improvement Projects and Real Estate Transactions policy](#).
- C. Should the space or entity cease to exist, the university will not be obligated to continue the recognition, nor will it be obligated to provide substitute recognition.
- D. If a donor's name changes during the period of recognition, the university may change the name of the space or entity at the donor's request and expense upon approval by the Board of Trustees.
- E. In the event the donor fails to fulfill the terms of their gift or the gift is not received by the university as outlined in the gift documentation (including, but not limited to, in accordance with the payment schedule), the university may remove the donor's name from the named space or entity.
- F. Although generally discouraged, existing spaces and entities with **honorific naming** recognition may be renamed with the approval of President's Cabinet and the Board of Trustees. Considerations include the history of the current name and the rationale of the renaming.
- G. If at any time the university determines that the continued naming of a space or entity may compromise the university's integrity or reputation, the university may amend or remove the name, upon approval by the President and Board of Trustees and notification of the donor, if possible.



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PROCEDURE

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- I. **Unit leaders** and unit Advancement staff are responsible for the monitoring and administration of potential and existing naming opportunities within their areas in collaboration with the Office of University Advancement (Advancement).
- II. Proposed naming opportunities must be initiated with Advancement and signed by the unit leader before routing to the senior vice president for Advancement and President's Cabinet for review and approval.
- III. Philanthropic Namings
 - A. The following factors will be considered when defining minimum gift amounts associated with naming opportunities.
 1. For spaces:
 - a. Construction or renovation costs
 - b. Location, visibility, and prominence
 - c. Frequency of use by campus and non-campus constituents
 - d. Appropriate reflection of age of space
 - e. Fundraising goals and potential donors
 - f. Type of gift
 2. For entities:
 - a. Operating budget
 - b. National ranking
 - c. Similar namings at peer institutions
 - d. The potentially transformative nature of the philanthropic contribution
 - e. Type of gift, endowment or current use
 - B. Funding levels specific to namings associated with new or renovated spaces generally will not be determined until a project has completed the design phase.
 - C. Following President's Cabinet approval and, if necessary, Gift Acceptance Committee approval, naming opportunities may be discussed with donors.
 - D. Prior to gift acceptance, a unit Advancement staff member must confirm that the gift commitment meets the minimum funding level for a specified naming.
 - E. Upon execution of the gift documentation for the naming of a space or entity, an Advancement staff member from the requesting **unit** must prepare a naming resolution to submit for approval by the Board of Trustees at an upcoming meeting. Naming resolutions related to interior spaces for new construction will be submitted for approval by the Board of Trustees just prior to, or upon, a facility's official occupancy.
 - F. Following the Board of Trustees approval, the senior vice president for Advancement will communicate final approvals to the originator of the naming request.
 - G. The unit Advancement staff member installs recognition signage per [University Signage Standards](#).
- IV. Honoric Namings
 - A. Anyone wishing to request an honorific naming must consult with their unit Advancement staff member who will submit a naming request to the senior vice president for Advancement. The naming request must include a rationale for the request, an overview of the honoree's accomplishments in service or commitment to the university, and be signed by the unit leader.
 - B. In addition to overall record of service to the university, the relationship between the proposed space or entity to be named and the proposed honoree will be considered.
 - C. Individuals must be disassociated from employment or service to the university for at least three years prior to approval of an honorific naming.



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- D. Upon approval by the President’s Cabinet, an Advancement staff member from the requesting unit must prepare a naming resolution and work with Advancement to submit for Board of Trustees approval.
- E. Following the Board of Trustees approval, the senior vice president for Advancement will communicate final approvals to the originator of the naming request.

V. Administrative Namings

- A. In coordination with the Office of Administration and Planning, the senior vice president for Advancement will submit **administrative naming** requests to President’s Cabinet.
- B. Once approved by the President’s Cabinet, Advancement will submit naming resolutions to the Board of Trustees for approval at its next meeting.
- C. Following the Board of Trustees approval, the senior vice president for Advancement will communicate final approvals to the originator of the request.

Responsibilities

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Board of Trustees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and approve all namings. 2. Approve renaming of spaces and entities with honorific naming recognition as outlined in the policy. 3. Approve amendment or removal of names as outlined in the policy.
Office of Administration and Planning	Coordinate with senior vice president for Advancement on submitting administrative naming requests to President’s Cabinet.
Office of University Advancement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor and administer potential and existing naming opportunities within units in collaboration with unit leaders and unit Advancement staff. 2. In collaboration with requesting units, coordinate submission of naming requests for review by President’s Cabinet, Gift Acceptance Committee if necessary, and Board of Trustees.
President’s Cabinet	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and approve all naming opportunities and requests as outlined in the policy. 2. Approve renaming of spaces and entities with honorific naming recognition as outlined in the policy. 3. Approve amendment or removal of names as outlined in the policy.
Senior Vice President for Advancement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and approve all naming opportunities and requests as outlined in the policy. 2. Direct submission of naming requests for review by President’s Cabinet, Gift Acceptance Committee if necessary, and Board of Trustees. 3. Convene Gift Acceptance Committee to review namings, as necessary. 4. Communicate final approvals to request originators.
Unit Advancement staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor and administer potential and existing naming opportunities within unit in collaboration with Advancement. 2. Submit naming requests to senior vice president for Advancement as outlined in the policy. 3. Prior to gift acceptance, confirm that gift commitment meets minimum funding level. 4. Prepare naming resolutions for Board of Trustees approval and work with Advancement to submit for Board of Trustees approval. 5. Install recognition signage per University Signage Standards.
Unit leader	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor and administer potential and existing naming opportunities within unit. 2. Seek approval prior to detailed external discussions of new naming opportunities. 3. Sign all proposed naming requests prior to submission to senior vice president for Advancement.



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Resources

Governance Documents

- Gift Acceptance policy, advancement.osu.edu/sites/default/files/migrated/assets/files/Gift_Acceptance_Policy.pdf
- Campus Signage Standards, fod.osu.edu/sites/default/files/signage.pdf
- Ohio Administrative Code section 3335-1-08(D), codes.ohio.gov/oac/3335-1-08v1

Additional Guidance

- Frequently Asked Questions, advancement.osu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2020/06/Naming_Policy_FAQ.pdf

Contacts

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
Policy questions	Advancement, Donor Experience	800-678-6412	donorexperience@osu.edu

History

- Issued: 1992
- Revised: 11/1995
- Revised: 06/1999
- Revised: 05/03/2010
- Revised: 04/06/2012
- Edited: 08/2013
- Reviewed: 10/07/2013
- Edited: 05/01/2013 Template updated
- Revised: 07/01/2020 Approved by BOT, 06/03/2020, Resolution #2020-126; renamed Naming of University Spaces and Entities