EXT-004

Naming Policies for the University of Virginia

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Contact Office External Relations

Oversight Executive
Senior Vice President for External Relations

Applies To
Academic Division, the Medical Center, the College at Wise, and University-Associated Organizations.

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Reason for Policy

This policy aims to ensure consistency in the naming of buildings, spaces, and academic units across the institution and establish naming and re-naming principles that reflect the University's values. The policy also defines the roles of the Board of Visitors of the University and the Naming and Memorials Committee (appointed by the president) in naming opportunities.

Definition of Terms

Commercial Enterprises

Description

Revenue-generating businesses operated for the benefit of the University community and the general public, such as retail stores or restaurants, but excluding those operated by vendors under contract to the University to provide student and retail dining services.

Policy Statement

The following provisions will be applied in the naming (for individuals, business entities, foundations, or other organizations) of schools/colleges, centers, institutes, and departments (collectively, "academic units"), commercial enterprises, programmatic initiatives, and physical structures and spaces, or parts thereof, on the University of Virginia Grounds or property owned or leased by the University of Virginia or a University-Associated Organization, if used by the University. It includes buildings, portions of buildings (such as classrooms, auditoriums, foyers, and libraries), collections of buildings, monuments, fields, open air courtyards, streets, alleys, and other outdoor areas.

This policy should be reviewed by External Relations prior to the start of any new capital campaign.

1. **Principles on Naming and Re-Naming:**
   We believe that the principles guiding the naming and renaming of University spaces should reflect our values as an academic institution. These principles are designed to provide a framework/reference point/lens used by the relevant authorities when making naming/re-naming decisions. In fulfillment of these principles and in seeking to avoid improper influence and conflict of interest, the University is committed to due diligence in the implementation of its naming policies and procedures.
   a. **Pedagogy:** As an academic institution we use names and naming as a tool to build a living history. Names serve as a projection of our values: names reflect our traditions (where we have been) and our aspirations (where we are headed). An essential component of the (re)naming process is due diligence: it is the responsibility of the University to engage in serious and substantial scholarly research when considering a naming opportunity. That research should address the contribution and legacy of individuals, business entities, foundations, and other organizations after whom University entities have been or might be named; the meanings that existing names have accrued over time, in context, across the University community; and the ways such names can contribute to building traditions and community at the University. The principle of pedagogy requires that the research compiled is part of the public record so that future generations understand the importance of the (re)naming, the procedure that went into the (re)naming decision, and the social, political, and historical context that surround the (re)naming.
   b. **Commitment:** Naming connotes the establishment of a tradition. The University expends time and energy in making a naming decision. Those wishing to name or rename a new or existing space accept the burden of due diligence in justifying such decisions: they must demonstrate that a proposed name is consistent with the pedagogical purposes and community values of the University. Once a building, space, or academic unit has been named, there is an assumption that the name shall not be changed before the end of the naming term, unless there are exceptional circumstances or compelling reasons for such a change. That rationale must be documented appropriately.
2. **General Rules:**
   a. All namings should conform to the University's Principles on Naming and Re-Naming (see Section 1, above).
   b. The University reserves the right to rename a building, space, or academic unit (see Section 5, Duration and Modification of Namings, below).
   c. An academic program of study at the University leading to a degree may not be named; interdisciplinary majors will be considered in this same category and may not be named. However, programmatic initiatives that support unique or special characteristics of an academic program may be named. Should a named programmatic initiative later become a degree-conferring program, the degree-conferring program shall not continue to carry the honoree's name. The University has the option, but is not obligated, to recognize the honoree another way.

d. For dormitories or other student residences, the names of longtime University faculty members deemed to have been effective classroom teachers over long periods of time shall be given high priority.
e. Dormitories should be designated as “Houses?” academic buildings as “Halls.” The designations “Pavilion” and “Hotel” are reserved for use on Jefferson’s Lawn and Ranges.
f. When a naming opportunity is presented, strong preference shall be given to persons who have had long, close, and valued associations with the University, as teachers, administrators, or distinguished and supportive alumni.
g. If a physical structure is named after an individual, only the last name of that person shall be used on the name of the structure, on any sign in front of the building, or in publications/media. First names and initials shall be allowed to recognize the naming of centers, academic units, and interior spaces when these are named after individuals.
h. Unnamed buildings and spaces that date from the University’s early history may not be named. Buildings and spaces from this era that are currently named may not be re-named. Facilities from this era include: the Rotunda, the Lawn, the Pavilions, the Lawn and Range Rooms, Monroe Hill House/Range, and Randall Hall.
i. Functional names (e.g., Aquatics and Fitness Center, Printing and Copying Center, 2400 Old Ivy Road, etc.) for facilities not yet assigned philanthropic or honorific names may be determined by the senior vice president for operations or their designee.
j. Exceptions to this policy may be made only by the president of the University of Virginia with final approval from the Board of Visitors.

3. **Philanthropic Naming Requirements:**
   a. Where an individual, business entity, foundation, or other organization contributes a minimum of 51% of the private costs of construction of a facility or space, or 51% of the private replacement cost of an existing facility or space, a name suggested by such contributor for that project will be given serious consideration. Such considerations include: if the proposed name is deemed to be one that brings distinction and honor to the University, is consistent with the traditions and purposes of the University, and conforms to the University’s Principles on Naming and Re-Naming (see Section 1, Principles on Naming and Re-Naming, above). Marketability and the visibility of a facility or space will also be considered when determining the appropriate amount for such a naming opportunity.
   b. When a new facility will afford multiple naming opportunities, the University executive responsible for the facility or academic unit, in conjunction with the chief development officer, should consult with the senior vice president for external relations before the full range of naming opportunities and their respective giving levels are finalized.
   c. Where an individual, business entity, foundation, or other organization contributes a minimum of 51% of the projected annual operating costs of a school or college, center, institute, or department, a name suggested by such contributor for that academic unit will be given serious consideration if such name is deemed to be a name that will bring distinction and honor to the University, is consistent with the traditions and purposes of the University, and conforms to the University’s Principles on Naming and Re-Naming (see Section 1, Principles on Naming and Re-Naming, above). Marketability, the ranking and visibility of an academic unit, and any similar namings at peer institutions will also be considered when determining the appropriate amount for such a naming opportunity.
   d. At a minimum, 75% of a gift to name an academic unit should be in the form of endowment support, unless otherwise approved by the President.
   e. Schools/colleges, centers, institutes, and departments may not be named for business entities, foundations, or other organizations.

f. Only in rare circumstances may a University facility or space be named for a business entity, foundation, or other organization, although joint ventures between the University and other entities may constitute a natural exception. Business entities, foundations, or other organizations proposed for naming should have a positive image and demonstrated integrity (see Section 5, Duration and Modification of Namings, below). Additional due diligence should be taken to avoid any appearance of improper influence or conflict of interest. Signage reflecting the naming of a facility or space for a business entity, foundation, or other organization typically may not include the entity's logo or other branding elements. The duration of a naming period for a facility or space named for a business entity, foundation, or other organization may be limited, and will be specified in the agreement governing the terms of the gift.

g. Select irrevocable deferred gifts may be used to name a University facility, space, or academic unit as long as the present value of the gift meets the agreed-upon gift level, and—in the case of facilities—provided there is no current need of funds for facility renovation or expansion. The University's Gift Policy Committee must approve the use of a deferred gift for a naming before the request is submitted to the Naming and Memorials Committee for consideration.

4. **Honorific Naming Requirements:**

An honorific naming (a naming not supported by a philanthropic gift) should recognize distinguished or exceptional levels of achievement, and such naming honorees should demonstrate virtues the University hopes its students seek to emulate. Honorific namings consider the University's mission related to inclusion and diversity, and requests should be supported with extraordinary justification. As with philanthropic namings, an honorific naming will be given serious consideration if such name is deemed to be a name that will bring distinction and honor to the University, is consistent with the traditions and purposes of the University, and conforms to the University's Principles on Naming and Re-Naming (see Section 1, above).

5. **Duration and Modification of Namings:**

a. Subject to clause 5e below, philanthropic namings of buildings and spaces shall remain in place for at least 75 years or the life of the building or space, whichever is shorter. Honorific namings of buildings and spaces shall remain in place for at least 25 years. The President reserves the right to negotiate longer naming terms. Any such negotiated terms shall be documented in the associated gift agreement, which shall be reviewed by the secretary to the Board of Visitors.

b. Following the completion of their specific naming terms, buildings, spaces, and academic units **may** be considered for renaming.

c. When a naming period has concluded, regardless of the reason, the University shall not be obligated to name new or alternative facilities, spaces, or academic units for the honoree.

d. In the case of a philanthropically-supported name, if an honoree's name changes before the conclusion of a naming period, the University is not obligated to change the name, but in its sole discretion may change the name at the donor's request and expense, whether the donor is an individual, business entity, foundation, or other organization.

e. The University of Virginia reserves the right to rename its academic units and facilities, typically in the event of unusual or compelling circumstances. The University, in the sole and absolute discretion of its Board of Visitors, may exercise this option at any time. Any such re-naming will be executed in accordance with the University's Principles on Naming and Re-Naming (see Section 1, above). In the event of such renaming, the University shall have no financial responsibility to the donor(s) or honoree(s), despite anything that may be stated or implied to the contrary.

f. The University may remove a name from a building, space, or academic unit without the obligation to assign a new philanthropic or honorific name to that building, space, or academic unit. A functional name shall be selected until the University wishes to consider a new philanthropic or honorific name.

g. In exceptional circumstances, additional names may be added to a facility or space in recognition of an additional gift, even if the prior donor's or honoree's naming period has not concluded, subject to any specific terms and conditions set forth in the original gift or naming agreement. Hyphenation may be used for a joint or dual naming of a facility or space.

6. **Administration of this Policy:**
   The senior vice president for external relations shall administer this policy and reference it as appropriate in any written agreement or understanding regarding naming. External Relations will be responsible for initiating review of this policy prior to the start of any new capital campaign.

7. **Compliance with Policy:**
   Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may compromise the University's fundraising efforts and donor relations and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion in accordance with relevant University policies.

   Direct questions about this policy to External Relations.

Procedures

Steps for Naming:

a. Whenever a name is to be given to an academic center, institute, or department, or a physical structure or space, or parts thereof, whether new or already existing, a formal naming request shall be submitted in writing to the chair and/or executive secretary of the Naming and Memorials Committee (Committee) by the University executive responsible for the facility or academic unit, in conjunction with the chief development officer, if applicable. The request must document how the appropriate University community members have been consulted with respect to the proposed name. The president or their designee may also request that the Committee suggest a suitable name if a name has not yet been proposed.
b. The Committee shall make its report promptly in writing indicating whether the Committee believes any proposed name or names to be appropriate or inappropriate for the purpose intended, and the Committee's recommendation will be forwarded to the president for their consideration.
c. The naming of a school or college is a decision with high-profile visibility and should be considered carefully with regard to its potential impact. Before a donor is presented with a naming opportunity for a school or college, the president, in consultation with the provost, senior vice president for external relations, and (if applicable) the relevant dean or unit director, must approve the philanthropic requirements and potential honoree. Once the president's approval is obtained, the donor may be presented with the naming opportunity, and if accepted, the naming request will follow the same procedures outlined in paragraphs a and b above.
d. Following approval by the Naming and Memorials Committee and the president, proposed names for new or existing buildings and structures, exterior spaces, schools/colleges, centers, institutes, departments, or commercial enterprises shall be forwarded to the Board of Visitors for final approval. Notification of naming opportunities that do not require Board of Visitors approval (namings of interior spaces such as classrooms, meeting rooms, laboratories, and clinical waiting rooms, excluding interior spaces in commercial enterprises) will be shared, for informational purposes, with the Board on a regular basis as part of the Advancement Committee agenda. Naming opportunities that result from a pledge/commitment or bequest intention for a donor (or donors) shall not be forwarded to the Board of Visitors until 50% of the financial contribution has been received.

Related Information

Naming and Memorials Committee

Policy Background

Adopted: October 1996.

Major Category External Relations

Next Scheduled Review Monday, October 26, 2026

Revision History

Updated titles 7/31/25; Added defined term, updated Policy Statement and Procedure d. 10/26/23; University-Related Foundation changed to UAO 5/10/22; Added Compliance section 12/20/21; Updated 10/12/18; Adopted: October 1996.

Approved By Policy Review Committee

Approved Date Friday, October 12, 2018