

Student Organization Fundraising

Seeking funding for an event or conference is a great way for departments to raise money and awareness of their specific objectives and needs. It can also help to remind the community about the various university departments and their purpose on campus.

Oakland University is a non-profit, publicly-funded institution. We rely heavily on donor support to make tuition more affordable, provide valuable teaching and learning resources on campus and fund student scholarships. Management of this support must be carefully orchestrated in order to maintain good long-term stewardship of donors beyond your time at OU.

In an effort to assist departments and student organizations with fundraising, the office of Corporate & Foundation Relations has created this guide which includes helpful tips and resources.

Raising Money for Your Organization, Team or Project

- Events (conferences, golf outings, performances, etc.)
 - If checks are made payable directly to the student org, you must clearly state there is no tax benefit
 - If checks are made to payable to Oakland University, the donors may receive a tax benefit – see below for approval process
 - Should be worth the effort to put on the event
 - Time and effort vs \$ raised
 - Cannot be scheduled during the study period or immediately before, during or after final exams
 - Auctions (silent or live) should state value of items
 - Must be approved by Department Chair, Dean, or in the case of student organizations, by the Director of Center for Student Activities or the Club Sports Coordinator
 - Date auctions are not permitted
 - Process:
 - Complete the Sponsorship Levels Template, Sponsorship Letter Template, Thank You Letter Template, Sponsorship Worksheet and Prospect Worksheet.
 - STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS: Forward completed package to Jean Ann Miller, jam@oakland.edu, who will review and forward to Annual Giving
 - CLUB SPORTS: Forward completed package to Gabby Sokol, gesokol@oakland.edu, who will review and forward to Annual Giving
 - UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS OR PROGRAMS: Forward completed package to Michelle Bosau at bosau@oakland.edu, who will review and forward to Annual Giving
 - Corporate & Foundation Relations and Annual Giving will review, offer suggestions, approve or deny package
 - **PLEASE ALLOW AT LEAST TWO WEEKS FOR APPROVAL PROCESS**

- Once you have received approval, you may solicit the approved prospective sponsors and donors.
 - Make sure gifts go through Gift Accounting.
 - Gift Accounting will send a tax receipt thank you letter.
 - Departments and Student Organizations should also send a personalized thank you letter.

- Sales (t-shirts, raffles, auctions, car washes, etc)
 - Product sales featuring an OU logo must follow logo guidelines (see below, under marketing guidelines) and use approved vendors
 - **All raffles (anything with a prize) must be approved by Development and Alumni Relations**
 - When in doubt, ask yourself – does everyone get the prize?
 - Raffle license required from the State of Michigan
 - Prior approval needed from Development and Alumni Relations
 - Allow 6-8 weeks for processing by State of Michigan
 - Information and details – [Charitable Gaming Michigan Lottery](#)
 - [Raffle License Application](#)
 - Cash prizes awarded to students may affect student aid packages
 - Greek organizations are not allowed to hold raffles or drawings of any kind, per state rules
 - Games of skill (guess # of jelly beans in a jar) do not require state licensing

- Direct solicitation (letters, email, crowdfunding, personal solicitation, etc.)
 - Crowdfunding
 - Fast, efficient and effective if done right
 - Choosing right platform, goal and audience can be difficult
 - Please contact Development Office first - years of experience & can give you specialized tips, ideas and pitfalls to watch out for
 - OU is working to provide a crowdfunding option for student orgs in the future - stay tuned

- Sponsorships
 - All solicitations (corporate and individual) require prior approval from the office of Corporate & Foundation Relations to eliminate direct competition with OU fundraising
 - If you've heard of them, then most likely we have, too
 - Publicly traded companies (Chrysler, Lear, IBM, etc.) must also be cleared through same channels
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Marketing Guidelines

- Must follow University Communications and Marketing (C&M) guidelines
 - OU logo guidelines: [Oakland Logo Link](#)
 - Trademarked - organizations are “borrowing” logo which is owned by OU
 - May be used in electronic or print media
 - What not to do – alter logo, etc (examples on C&M site)

On-campus Philanthropy Project Ideas

- OUCARES
- Counseling Center
- OU Veteran’s Affairs
- Meadow Brook Hall
- Keeper of the Dream
- Disability Support Services at OU
- Lowry Early Childhood Center
- Alternative Spring Break
- Many more – hundreds of funds searchable by key word

Best Practices

- Good stewardship - always thank donors, sponsors and speakers
 - Any note of thanks, especially hand-written notes
 - No matter the size of the contribution
 - Supporters who feel appreciated are more likely to help in the future

- Record-keeping is key
 - Donors – names, contact info, gift amounts, etc
 - Fundraising events – details of amount raised, logistics, etc
 - Past members of your organization – names, contact info
- Evaluate your fundraising efforts
 - Create a report following your event
 - Successes
 - Failures
 - Helpful to future leadership of the organization
 - Don't reinvent the wheel

Keys to a Successful Student Organization Fundraiser

- Determine audience – broad or targeted
- Perform a needed service or meet a need
- Be well-publicized using various media
- Bring the organization and the community together
- Capitalize on the talents of your organization

Fundraising Checklist

- ✓ Brainstorm ideas
- ✓ Determine who is YOUR audience
- ✓ Set fundraising goals
- ✓ List required resources
- ✓ Determine the type of fundraising you will pursue (event, crowdfund, etc.)
- ✓ Consider the timing of fundraising (seasonal, weather, competing activities or similar events)
- ✓ Set a timeline for your campaign
- ✓ Develop creative marketing campaign

RULES TO FOLLOW

- All requests must comply with IRS regulations
- Must adhere to OU policies
- Must follow student organization policies (for example, to ensure there is no personal benefit, there must be a secondary sign-off on the account)
- Use of university resources is strictly prohibited
 - Faculty advisors and students
 - OU email system cannot be used as a means for advertising or soliciting
 - Position at OU may not be used to further the cause
 - No preferred OU website placement
 - OU will only promote fundraisers in which the university is the beneficiary

- There are many worthwhile causes to support within OU – if your organization wants to support a cause, there may be an existing one at OU (see below for examples)

Tax receipts

- Gifts made directly to student organizations cannot receive tax receipts - this must clearly be stated to donors
- Gifts made directly to OU and designated for an organization will be issued tax receipts
 - Gifts must be used for the donor's intended purpose
 - You can rest easy knowing that if someone says a gift goes to this org, then we can only spend it this way
 - Audit = checks and balances
 - Need to go through OU's Development Office (checks written to OU, online at Oakland.edu/giving)
 - [Donor Forms and Resources Link](#)

Resources

- Annual Giving can help advise on your fundraising plans
 - Allow plenty of time
 - Provide outline of fundraiser
- Contact: email giving@oakland.edu or (248) 370-4504