

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM  
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM**

**SECTION: Advancement and Alumni**

**NUMBER: 08.A.04**

**AREA: General**

**SUBJECT: Naming Opportunities**

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1. PURPOSE

This document prescribes the University of Houston System policy for designated capital naming opportunities (buildings, classrooms, landscaping, programs, centers or institutes, etc.) in accordance with [Board policy 32.02](#).

2. POLICY

- 2.1. It is System tradition to name certain of its facilities (buildings, portions of buildings, roads, plazas, parking garages/lots) and academic units (campuses, colleges, schools, departments, centers and institutes), in honor of donors (individuals, business entities, and private foundations), and persons or other parties who have made substantial contributions to the System or to education in general.
- 2.2. The Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni shall oversee the administration and implementation of System naming procedures to ensure naming decisions reflect System values as an academic institution and reflect favorably on, and bring honor to, the System. The Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni may make exceptions to this Policy in special circumstances with written approval from the Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance and the Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs/General Counsel.
- 2.3. Naming opportunities may recognize a donor's generosity to the System or one of its universities, or honor or commemorate an individual or entity based on distinguished leadership and/or service to the System or one of its universities (in honor of and in memory of donor(s)), at the discretion of the University of Houston System Naming Opportunities Committee, with approval of the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni, the Chancellor, and, if applicable, the Board of Regents, in accordance with [SAM 08.A.02](#).
- 2.4. The System, through a naming advisory committee (the "System Naming Opportunities Committee" or the "Committee"), shall conduct appropriate due diligence when considering a naming opportunity to ensure absence of

improper influence or conflict of interest. The review shall include a careful assessment of the contribution and legacy of individuals, business entities, foundations, and other organizations, reputation and values, public perception of such, as well as alignment with the University's mission, core values, honored traditions, and future goals.

- 2.5. To protect the System's interests, business and other organizational namings shall comply with Board of Regent policies, the requirements of [Texas Education Code Section 51.923](#), and other requirements, whether set forth in System or university policy or other applicable law. To determine the feasibility of naming opportunities for an entity, whether a business, foundation, or other entity, the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni, or delegate, shall consult with the System Treasurer to determine whether the area connected with the naming opportunity has been or may be financed through tax-exempt bonds as such namings are limited and may adversely impact the tax-exempt nature of the bonds. Business namings associated with sponsorships also may have tax-related issues requiring review by appropriate System or university offices.
- 2.6. The Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni, or delegate, is responsible for maintaining a master list of facility naming opportunities, which shall include all facilities financed with tax-exempt bonds.

### 3. PROCEDURES

- 3.1. The Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni shall appoint members of the System Naming Opportunities Committee in consultation with other System/University departments and divisions. The Committee's role is to advise and make recommendations on appropriate names for facilities and academic units at all System locations. The Committee shall be comprised of representatives from the following areas, as indicated below:
- a) Associate Vice President, Strategic Initiatives (Division of Advancement and Alumni), **Committee Chair**
  - b) Representative from Constituent Engagement (Division of Advancement and Alumni, UH)
  - c) Representative(s) – Development Officer/leader (Division of Advancement and Alumni, UH – up to three (3))
  - d) Representative from University Auxiliaries
  - e) Representative from Division of University Marketing and Communications, UH
  - f) Representative from UH Athletics
  - g) Representative from one of the System universities
  - h) Representative from Facilities/Construction Management
  - i) Representative, Strategic Initiatives (Division of Advancement and Alumni, UH) **Administrator, non-voting**
  - j) Director, Gift Agreements (Division of Advancement and

## Alumni) Resource, non-voting

- 3.2. All naming recommendations received by a department's development officer must be submitted to the Committee through its Chair, for prior approval. The Committee will ensure that recommendations comply with applicable law as well as System and University policies. In some instances, such as where the facilities are not assigned to specific development officers, the Committee may generate the initial recommendations, based on available information or recommendations received from appropriate personnel.
- 3.3. As soon as it becomes aware of specific naming recommendations, the Committee shall notify departments potentially impacted by the naming, including but not limited to, Facilities Planning and Construction in accordance with [SAM 01.B.07 \(Facilities Acquisition, Construction, or Renovation\)](#) and the System Treasurer. Naming recommendations for auxiliary services may be made only after discussions with the Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance. In accordance with Section 3.6, the System Treasurer must review and approve in writing all proposed naming opportunities to protect the System's tax-exempt status.
- 3.4. The Committee shall review and assess all naming recommendations submitted to or generated by the Committee in accordance with this Policy. The Committee shall submit its decisions on whether or not to approve the naming to the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni. Final approval of the naming must be made in accordance with Section 3.6.
- 3.5. Duration of Namings
  - 3.5.1. Individuals. Namings recognizing individuals associated with any building, or part of a building, shall remain in place for the useful life of that building, or part thereof so designated, subject to conditions set forth in this Policy. In the event that a building, or any part thereof, named for a donor is removed or replaced at the expiration of its useful life, the University shall not be obligated to continue the name, nor shall it be obligated to name any new construction intended to replace the building, or any part thereof, after the donor. The University may seek other means to recognize the donor after the useful life of the building.
  - 3.5.2. Entities. Business naming terms may not exceed ten (10) years. If the name of a business changes after a facility is named for the entity, the name of the facility generally would remain the same except as otherwise indicated in the applicable naming agreement, or if no such agreement exists, upon the Committee's recommendation in accordance with this Policy.
  - 3.5.3. During the duration of the naming of a facility, space, or other physical area, if and when the area requires extensive renovations, change of

location, or any other circumstance that will substantially change the nature of the facility from what was presented to the Donor(s), then the University shall inform the Donor(s), if practical about any such changes, as well as related changes to the recognition associated with the Donor(s). The notice to Donor(s) shall occur, if possible, before a contract for construction is executed and before construction begins.

3.6. Approvals

- 3.6.1. The System Treasurer must approve all naming opportunities to protect the System's tax-exempt status.
- 3.6.2. In accordance with [Board policy 32.02](#), the Board must approve the naming of a building (new, existing or expanded), college, school, program, institute or center.
- 3.6.3. The Chancellor, or designee, must approve all other naming opportunities.

3.7. Signage

- 3.7.1. Upon final approval of a naming opportunity, the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni will ensure that properly designed and placed signage is developed in accordance with the System's signage policies, guidelines and standards, as originally presented to the Donor, and with Donor's(s') final approval of the design as necessary.
- 3.7.2. Appropriate recognition signage will be placed to commemorate the naming opportunity. All signage must comply with the System's published signage design standards and coordinated through the Office of Strategic Initiatives in the Division of Advancement and Alumni. Recognition components, other than the naming, will be developed by the Office of Constituent Engagement in the Division of Advancement and Alumni.
- 3.7.3. A capital project's budget (building or major facility) will include reserved funds, from the philanthropic naming gifts, to cover recognition signage. For non-capital projects, 1% of the gift will be reserved for signage needs.
- 3.7.4. Businesses will be recognized by name per System recognition signage standards. Business naming gifts of \$1,000,000 and above, or one-third to one-half of the cost for capital projects, may be recognized by a business brand marker within the university signage standards. Business donors are responsible for paying for replacement signage if the donor changes its name or branding or is merged into another business entity during the naming term.

3.8. Naming Agreements

All gift naming opportunities shall be formalized in a written agreement, reviewed by the Office of General Counsel, and signed by Donor(s) and legally authorized representatives of the University.

3.9. Removal or Revocation of Naming

3.9.1. The System may remove or revoke any conferred naming(s) (whether programmatic, physical space, restricted endowments, chairs, professorships, scholarships, etc.) on appropriate grounds and without any obligation to return any funds received from the Donor. The Chancellor, and if applicable, the System Board of Regents, must approve any proposed naming removal or revocation.

3.9.2. The following conditions constitute appropriate grounds to remove or revoke a naming:

(a) A philanthropic naming opportunity is used to replace an honorary naming;

(b) Demolition, replacement, or substantial renovation or reconstruction of a physical space that substantially changes the function or appearance of the space, or when the space is repurposed;

(c) If the Donor fails to satisfy the pledge upon which the naming was bestowed, in which case the University, in its sole discretion may determine an alternative recognition or duration of the naming for the portion of the gift already received;

(d) If a planned gift upon which the naming was approved by the Board or System does not result in the value promised by the Donor;

(e) In the case of changed circumstances where such a change renders the use of the gift associated with the naming impossible, impractical, unlawful, or wasteful (such as when a named program is discontinued, as permitted by the naming agreement);

(f) In the unlikely event the Board determines in good faith that circumstances have changed such that the naming may compromise public trust or adversely impact the reputation, image, mission, or integrity of the System, the applicable university, or the Board; and/or

(g) The Donor requests removal of the name.

3.9.3. Any proposals to remove or revoke a naming must be reviewed and

approved by the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni, the Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance, the Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs/General Counsel, the Chancellor, and, as applicable, the Board. Prior to the approval of a name revocation by the Chancellor or Board, the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni shall first consult with the Donor and, if applicable, provide the Donor, or a representative of the Donor, the opportunity to voluntarily relinquish the name from the University facility or academic unit, as the case may be.

- 3.9.4. Upon any such termination of the naming, the Board, the System, and the university shall have no further obligation or liability to donor and shall not be required to return any portion of the gift already paid. The Board, however, may in its sole and absolute discretion determine an alternative recognition for the portion of the gift already received.

#### 4. NAMING OPPORTUNITIES AND GIFTING LEVELS

- 4.1. Generally, naming opportunities will not be granted for a donor's deferred gift commitment or in-kind gift. Exceptions may be made by the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni in consultation with the Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs/General Counsel.
- 4.2. Business names may not be used for colleges, schools or academic units.
- 4.3. Suggested minimum gift levels for common naming opportunities are set forth below. Specific amounts for colleges, schools, programs, or new buildings shall not be discussed with donors without first coordinating with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni. See [SAM 03.F.02](#) (Section 3.3.1 for minimum funding levels for endowments). The following amounts may vary depending on the university, cost of the facility and location.
- 4.3.1. College: Minimum gift range of \$10 million to \$25 million.
- 4.3.2. School: Minimum gift range of \$5 million to \$15 million.
- 4.3.3. Program, Center or Institute: Minimum gift range of \$3 million to \$5 million.
- 4.3.4. Building or Major Facility: Minimum gift range between one-fifth to one-half the cost of the project or the replacement cost of an existing building.
- 4.3.5. Other Facilities: Minimum gift range between one-third to one-half the full approximate cost of a new facility or the estimated replacement cost of an existing facility. The Committee will not consider opportunities below \$25,000.

- 4.3.6. Public Art and Library Collections: Naming collections follow appropriate policy and procedure for establishing endowments according to SAM 03.F.02 - Endowment Management. The Naming Opportunities Committee will evaluate gift ranges.
- 4.4. A maintenance endowment fund should be considered when discussing gift levels for buildings, landscaping and other facilities.
  - 4.5. The first pledge payment, as agreed to in the gift agreement, must be made in full against the pledged gift before the official naming takes effect. A portion of the gift given for a naming opportunity can be used for signage and should be considered into the final commitment.
  - 4.6. Pledge payment schedules in a gift agreement may not exceed five years, unless extraordinary circumstances are approved by the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni, after consultation with the Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance about available funding of the project.
  - 4.7. All endowments associated with naming opportunities must follow appropriate policy and procedure for establishing endowments according to [SAM 03.F.02](#) – Endowment Management.

5. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni  
Review: Every five years

6. APPROVAL

Approved: */Eloise Brice/*  
Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Alumni

*/Renu Khator/*  
Chancellor

Date: December 19, 2023