Vanderbilt University
Law School

Class Agent Handbook
Fiscal Year 2017
Dear Class Agents,

Thank you for serving as a Fiscal Year 2017 Class Agent! The Class Agent Program is a vital part of the Law School’s annual fundraising efforts, and has proven year after year to be a standout avenue for securing annual alumni donations and boosting overall alumni giving participation rates. It is through the efforts of generous volunteers like you that we are able to add a personal touch to our annual giving campaign efforts.

This handbook is designed to give you all the information you need to effectively carry out your fundraising responsibilities. Of course, if you have any questions along the way, please feel free to reach out to me at any time!

Thank you again for your help as a Class Agent. I look forward to working with you to ensure the continued success of Vanderbilt Law School.

Best,

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Class Agent Responsibilities

1. Make an Annual Gift
Class Agents should lead by example and make a gift or pledge early in the fiscal year. A Class Agent is in a much better position to ask for gifts if he or she has already made a contribution.

2. Set a Goal
I will provide you with a preliminary participation goal based on historical class giving data, and Class Agents are welcome to make adjustments to the proposed goal based on their own sense of their class’s giving potential and the influence of other factors within any given year.

3. Fall Solicitation Letter
A solicitation letter (with enclosed pre-paid giving envelope) is sent out under the Class Agent’s signature in the fall to his or her classmates who have not given since the beginning of the current fiscal year (fiscal year runs from July 1 – June 30). Below is a summary of solicitation letter options.

- **Letter Content**
  - Option 1: DAR drafted solicitation letter (with or without Class Agent’s edits)
  - Option 2: Class Agent drafted solicitation letter (approved by DAR office)

- **Letterhead**
  - Option 1: Vanderbilt Class Agent Program letterhead
  - Option 2: Class Agent’s letterhead (firm, company, personal, etc.)

- **Signatures**
  - Option 1: Class Agent hand signs each letter (can include personal notes)
  - Option 2: DAR staff inserts Class Agent’s scanned signature

- **Mailing**
  - Option 1: Class Agent mails letters
  - Option 2: DAR office mails letters

4. Spring Solicitation Email
An email will be sent out under the Class Agents name in the Spring to those in the class who have yet to make a gift. Sample text will be provided which the Class Agent may edit, and emails will be sent out by the Development office.

5. Personal Outreach
Class Agents are encouraged to follow up with classmates via phone, email, or personal meetings. Updates on your class’ giving will be provided in December and May or as requested.
Class Agent Timeline

October 3-7, 2016: Class Agents receive sample solicitation letter and have the option to revise and return any edits by October 20

November 3, 2016: Class Agent letters are mailed out for those who use Class Agent stationary and an electronic signature

November 24, 2016: The Law School will send out an email and mailing recognizing Class Agents by name and encouraging classmates to make a gift. (This is coordinated by the Development office, and Class Agents do not need to take any action on this.)

December 7, 2016: Class Agents will receive an update from the Development office on their class’ giving

March 15, 2017: Class Agents will receive a sample email and have the option to revise and return any edits by March 29

April 5, 2017: Class Agent Emails sent

May 29, 2017: Class Agents will receive an update from the Development office on their class’ giving with a number of suggested contacts highlighted

Personal Outreach Tips

- Make your own gift first; lead by example.
- Outline your own reasons for giving back.
- Offer information about the Law School’s current financial needs and the importance of and uses for annual unrestricted gifts.
- Share why you, personally, support the Law School.
- If your classmate has a history of giving, thank them for their faithful support.
- Ask for the Law School to be included as one of your classmate’s top 3 charitable contributions this year.
- If your classmate seems hesitant, speak from your own experience or find answers to common objections to giving on page 8.
- If your classmate makes a gift commitment, thank them for their support
- Send a personal note or email after the call, simply thanking them for their time.

Helpful Websites:

- [Law.vanderbilt.edu/classagents](http://Law.vanderbilt.edu/classagents) – Class Agent Program Website; contains updated stats on your class’ giving as well as a list of class donors.
- [Vu.edu/agentsgive](http://Vu.edu/agentsgive) – Class Agent Program giving link; you can give out this vanity link to classmates so that they can quickly and easily make their gifts.
- [Vuconnect.com](http://Vuconnect.com) – Vanderbilt’s Alumni Association alumni online directory; password protected
The Annual Fund: Why Annual Gifts Are Important

Annual Fund gifts to the Law School are not restricted by the donor for a particular purpose or fund. Each year, Vanderbilt Law School’s unrestricted dollar goal increases in order to keep up with inflation, as well as compete with other top 20 law schools that consistently raise well over a million dollars in unrestricted gifts annually.

According to the FY 2015 Northwestern Peer Benchmarking Survey, Vanderbilt Law School’s Annual Fund is modest in comparison to our peer schools (see chart below). Many schools consistently raise more in unrestricted gifts; however, our alumni participation compares favorably to our peers. While this shows us there is a need to improve in the area of unrestricted dollars raised, it also clearly demonstrates sound financial management. These schools are our competitors, yet we are competing with far less financial support while still recruiting top students and faculty and maintaining the collegiality for which we are known.

Why Give Unrestricted?

- Annual unrestricted gifts are available for current use and provide much-needed resources that enhance the overall experience for students. This includes student financial aid and scholarships, faculty retention and recruitment, facilities maintenance/upgrades, technology enhancement, curriculum development, library collections, and support for student organizations.
- Tuition alone does not cover the costs of educating a student at Vanderbilt Law School. Alumni support makes up the difference.
- Participation in the Annual Fund is an important measure of alumni attitudes toward Vanderbilt Law School and factors into many nationally published rankings.
Guide to Making a Gift

The Class Agent website contains all the information a donor needs to make a gift to Vanderbilt Law School. Please encourage all prospective donors to visit:

law.vanderbilt.edu/classagents

Ways to Give
1. Mail: Vanderbilt Law Gift Processing
   PMB 407727
   2301 Vanderbilt Place
   Nashville, TN 37240-7727
2. Online: Vu.edu/agentsgive.
3. Phone: (615) 322-2606

More Giving Options
- Matching Gifts http://www.matchinggifts.com/vanderbilt/
- Gifts of Stocks and Securities https://giving.vanderbilt.edu/givingstocks.php
- Planned Gifts https://giving.vanderbilt.edu/plannedgiving/

The Law School’s Founders Circle
An annual gift of $2,500 or more to Vanderbilt Law School guarantees membership into the Founders Circle, while graduates within the last 10 years are eligible for recognition with an annual gift of $1,000. Founders Circle members are invited to an annual dinner each spring with Law School administrators, faculty, and special guests to celebrate their generosity. In addition, they receive invitations to exclusive regional events with the Dean and other area alumni and friends of the Law School. Donor society membership runs from July 1 to June 30.

Vanderbilt Law School: News You Can Use

Fast Facts & Figures

Student Faculty Ratio: 14:1

Academic Programs & Centers:
- Ph.D. Program in Law and Economics
- Law & Business Certificate Program
- Branstetter Litigation & Dispute Resolution Program
- Energy, Environment and Land Use
- Intellectual Property
- International Legal Studies
- Law & Government
- Law & Innovation
- George Barrett Social Justice
- Criminal Justice
Academic Journals:
- Vanderbilt Law Review
- Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law
- Vanderbilt Journal of Entertainment and Technology Law
- Environmental Law & Policy Annual Review
- Journal of Risk and Uncertainty

1L Class
- 4,380 Applicants – (up 13.7% over last year; 3rd largest in history)
- 49 percent Women
- 22 percent Minority Students
- 11 Advanced Degree Holders
- Median GPA 3.7
- Median LSAT 167

Money Matters
- J.D. Program Tuition: $52,682
- Total Cost of Attendance $78,060
- % of students receiving grants or scholarships in 2015: 93%
- 50th percentile grant amount in 2015: $22,500
- In recent years, resources devoted to students and graduates seeking to do public interest work have more than tripled.

Rankings
- 16th US News (2017)
- 2nd Princeton Review; Quality of Life (2016)
- 14th Above the Law (2016)
- 7th National Jurist 2013 Best Law Schools

Job Market

![Employment Rate at ABA Benchmark](image-url)
Objections to Giving Overruled

“Vanderbilt should not buy into the *U.S. News & World Report*’s supposition that there exists a direct causal link between alumni donations and educational satisfaction of alumni.”

Although it may be an imperfect means of measuring alumni satisfaction and is certainly not the only means, it is true that alumni with strong affection for their alma mater will be more likely to give back on a regular basis. Peer assessment scores as well as assessment scores by lawyers and judges are factored into *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, and alumni participation is one thing that those asked to give an assessment may consider when formulating scores. In addition, grant-making organizations also look at alumni participation when making funding decisions.

“I am really angry about the Chancellor/Dean, or that my child was rejected admission, so I refuse to give to Vanderbilt.”

Although you cannot control the Chancellor’s/Dean’s actions or political beliefs, or overturn admissions decisions, try to remind them of the excellent education Vanderbilt Law School provided them and the exciting things happening around campus, or reminisce about events that took place when you were in law school. Try to encourage them not to let a single controversial issue influence their giving to the Law School.

“I get solicited too much and give enough to Vanderbilt. I already support the National Commodore Club (athletics) and pay my Alumni Association dues annually.”

Alumni are certainly encouraged to give to those activities and places which help define and enhance the Vanderbilt educational experience. However, the Law School Annual Fund directly supports the Law School’s most current needs, enables the Law School to achieve a balanced budget, and provides students with critical resources.

“I don’t feel that annual unrestricted contributions create a meaningful gift; a direct gift to a Vanderbilt organization or an endowed fund would be more effective.”

On the contrary, small unrestricted gifts do make a big difference because they can be used immediately at the Law School in whatever way they are most needed, as opposed to giving to an endowment where the money is reinvested.

“This year, my charitable giving went to (Name of Specific Charities).”

The alumnus/a clearly understands the importance of charitable giving by his or her generosity to other worthy causes. Keep in mind, Vanderbilt Law School is educating future world leaders and public servants who can address upcoming challenges faced by the nation and the world. Recognize there are many worthy charities out there, and urge your colleague to consider including Vanderbilt Law School as one of their top three annual charitable contributions.