

**Class**  
**Agent**  
*program*

Class Agent Handbook  
Fiscal Year 2021

*Dear volunteer,*

*Thank you for serving as a Class Agent this year! 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. It is through the efforts of generous volunteers like you that we can 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 Program Overview

### Theme & Purpose

Class Agents are a highly connected group of volunteers who are tasked with serving as a liaison between their Vanderbilt Law School classmates and the school with the primary goals of increasing alumni engagement and philanthropic support among their peers. Class agents are a key part of the law school's strategy to increase alumni participation and engagement through peer-to-peer outreach to generate support for the Annual Fund and other key priority areas within the school. Alumni participation through gifts at all levels impacts the law school's ability to provide critical support to students in the form of scholarships, innovative programs, technology enhancements and experiential learning opportunities.

### Structure

At least one Class Agent per JD class is recruited to serve, however, some classes have multiple agents which helps to ensure full coverage and representation of various programs and affinity groups within each class. Class Agents are selected for their leadership, consistent support, willingness to solicit their classmates for gifts and encourage other engagement opportunities. Recruitment of additional class agents is an ongoing effort, with onboarding for new members taking place at multiple times throughout the year.

### Term of Service

Class Agents are asked to serve for at least one fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) to ensure consistency for the class. They may serve multiple years, as long as roles and responsibilities are being fulfilled. Class Agents may also serve in other volunteer roles for the law school or the university.

### Roles and Responsibilities

As volunteers for the law school, Class Agents are expected to serve as passionate ambassadors and to utilize peer-to-peer outreach to communicate with their classmates throughout their term. All volunteers are expected to adhere to policies related to confidentiality and to utilize tools and outreach information only for its intended use.



## **Additionally, all Class Agents are expected to:**

### **1. Make a gift**

Gifts of any amount to the Law School Annual Fund and/or other area of VLS is encouraged and expected. You set the example by making your gift or pledge early in the fiscal year. Overall, volunteers are in a much better position to ask for gifts if they have already made a contribution.

### **2. Reach out to classmates**

We have two VLS-driven opportunities for you to reach out to classmates on a widespread scale, a fall letter and spring email. We also ask you to do personal outreach in and around campaigns already put on by Vanderbilt. These outlined below, and each is a great reason to contact classmates and let them know what's happening at Vanderbilt. We will provide you with periodic updates on your class' giving, and an updated class contact list can be requested at any time.

- **Fall letter** – A solicitation letter is sent out under the Class Agent's signature in the fall to classmates who have not yet given this fiscal year. Sample text will be provided which the Class Agent may edit, and letters will be sent out by the VLS Development & Alumni Relations team.
- **Spring email** – An email will be sent out under the Class Agents name to those in the class who have yet to make a gift. Sample text will be provided which the Class Agent may edit, and the email will be sent out by the VLS Development & Alumni Relations team.
- **Other campaigns** –
  - Socks Promotion – During October, anyone who makes a gift of \$35 or more receives a pair of limited-edition Vanderbilt socks. Socks is a very popular campaign for us and alumni look forward to this promotion all year.
  - Calendar Year End – In December, we encourage you to reach out to classmates to ask them to give before calendar year end. This is a popular time to give for tax reasons.
  - Giving Day – Vanderbilt's Giving Day will take place in spring 2021. We ask all of our volunteers to help promote this special day in which thousands of VU alumni and friends come together to support the area of VU they are most passionate about.
  - Fiscal Year End – In June, we will reach out with a list of classmates who have not yet made their FY21 gift and encourage you to reach out to them.

### **3. Thank those who give**

As important as it is to ask people to give, it's even more important to thank them for it. Handwritten notes by mail, a personal email or phone call goes a long way to tell someone of the difference they're making and how much we appreciate them.

### **4. Stay engaged with the law school**

Read newsletters, browse the website, and share updates with your classmates. Alumni want to know what's going on with the school, especially when you're asking them to give. Attend alumni gatherings in your area as you're able and encourage others to do the same.

### **5. Stay connected to staff liaison(s)**

Be responsive to emails as your schedule allows and help collaborate with us on what strategies work best for you and your classmates. We may be full-time fundraisers, but you know your classmates best – it takes both of us working together to achieve the best results! We're so excited to partner with you.

## Program Timeline

*While we typically have a general idea of what the entire fiscal year will look like for Class Agents, the coronavirus and subsequent remote work situation has made planning the entire year a bit more complex. For now, we have only planned through calendar year-end. However, be assured that spring will look fairly similar as far as the time required for this role.*

### September

- You will receive Sydney's kick-off email sharing fiscal year class goal, new handbook, and a class list with contact information.
- Prepare for fall solicitation letters mailing by personalizing letter to classmates. This letter will be drafted by the Vanderbilt staff and Sydney will send to you to make personalization edits. Please also send a copy of your signature if we do not already have this on file.

### October

- Your letter to classmates will be mailed on or around October 26. Please use this opportunity to follow up with classmates (i.e. "Did you get my note?", "Hope you got my letter!").
- Socks Campaign will go on all month long. This is another great reason to check in with people, as anyone who makes a gift of at least \$35+ will receive a pair of limited-edited Vanderbilt socks. One of our most popular campaigns!

### November

- Dean Guthrie's insider letter will go out toward the end of the month.

### December

- VLS will be sending out a calendar year-end email to alumni who have not already made a fiscal year gift. We encourage you to utilize this and send personal emails (or make phone calls) to classmates. Or, since this email will go out very close to December 31, it might be a good idea to send a personal email earlier in December to your class's non-donors.

## Personal Outreach Tips

- Make your own gift first; lead by example.
- Be confident in sharing why you, personally, support the law school.
- If your classmate has a history of giving, thank them for their loyal support.
- Send a personal note or email after a phone call to thank 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
  - <https://giving.vanderbilt.edu/oakleafsociety/> - The Oak Leaf Society recognizes donor loyalty to Vanderbilt.

## 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](http://law.vanderbilt.edu/classagents)

### Ways to Give

1. Online: [vu.edu/agentsgive](http://vu.edu/agentsgive)
2. Phone: (615) 322-2606
3. Mail: Vanderbilt Law Gift Processing  
PMB 407727  
2301 Vanderbilt Place  
Nashville, TN 37240-7727

### 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/>
- Electronic Bank Draft: <https://giving.vanderbilt.edu/ways-to-give/VU-EFT-form.pdf>

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Will I be given confidential information?**

Yes, class contact lists include the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses of your classmates. This is information intended solely for your use as a volunteer, and we ask that you keep this information confidential. Volunteers are also able to see which of their classmates have contributed to the law school during the current fiscal year as well as if they have made a gift in each of the past five fiscal years. (Gift amounts are not included to maintain privacy.)

### **How should I contact my classmates?**

We encourage volunteers to utilize email, phone calls, virtual/video calls and/or mail. Sometimes it takes more than one method of contact to secure a gift. Depending on the audience, a phone call or email is probably the most effective method, as a stronger case for giving to the law school can be made through conversation. If a phone call is made first, be sure to follow-up via email to re-emphasize important points and to supply pertinent links.

### **Do I ask for a specific amount?**

Rather than asking for a specific gift amount, ask for the Law School to be included as one of their top three charitable contributions this year. The emphasis is participation in any amount. Small gifts add up to make a big difference.

### **How do I respond to questions or objections?**

There may be times when you are asked questions that you are unable to answer or find yourself fielding unpleasant comments. Listen patiently to your classmates' comments or concerns and assure them that you will pass their comments along to the appropriate personnel at Vanderbilt. Our office will be glad to follow up to answer questions or address concerns. Despite complaints, most people will still wish to support the law school's mission as a whole; therefore, it is important to refocus the conversation. 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 school.

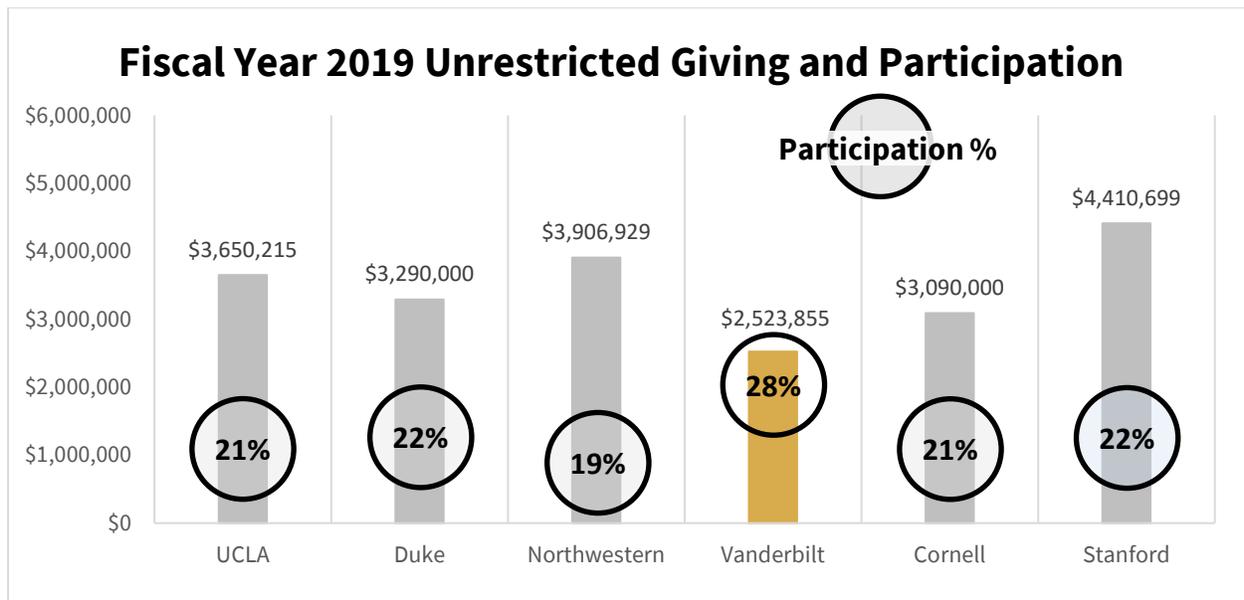
### **What is the Vanderbilt Law School Founders Circle?**

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.

## The Law School Annual Fund

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 three and four million dollars in unrestricted gifts on an annual basis.

According to the Northwestern Peer Benchmarking Survey with data through June 30, 2019, Vanderbilt Law School's Annual Fund is modest in comparison to our peer schools. 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. Compared to our competitors, 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 and 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.

# VLS Facts & Figures

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** 14:1

**Total Number of Students:** 640

## Rankings

*U.S. News & World Report (2020):* 18th

*Princeton Review, Quality of Life (2020):* 2nd

*Above the Law (2019):* 13th

## Money Matters

- J.D. Program Tuition: \$62,230
- Total Cost of Attendance: \$92,004
- Tuition ranks 25th among ABA-approved law schools in 2019-2020
- More than 80 percent of Vanderbilt Law students receive merit- or need-based scholarships in varying amounts with a median award of \$27,000 (45% tuition).

## 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*

## Employment Rate at ABA Benchmark

