



University Administrative Policy

Policy Name: Naming Opportunities and Gift Recognition Policy

Responsible Office: Salem State University Board of Trustees

Originator of the Policy: Advancement Office

Effective Date: 9/23/2013

Revision History: 7/7/14, 12/1/14, 12/14/15, 12/18/19, 1/29/20, 10/15/2025

Web Link: <https://records.salemstate.edu/policies>

1. Rationale

This policy (the "Policy") is designed to develop university-wide guidelines for gift naming opportunities and service recognition naming opportunities at Salem State University.

2. Statement of Policy

See end of document for the full policy.

3. Scope

This policy shall govern the administrative policy development process for all divisions, departments, and offices under the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees.

4. Fiscal Considerations

	Direct Costs / Savings / Revenue Generation	Indirect Costs / Savings / Revenue Generation
Initial Implementation	None	None
Ongoing	None	None

5. Responsibilities

Responsible Party	List of Responsibilities
Salem State University Board of Trustees	Overall responsibility for assuring compliance with the requirements of this Policy relating to gift naming opportunities and service recognition naming opportunities.

6. Policy Enforcement

Violation(s)	It shall be a violation of this policy to promulgate any applicable policy or take any action in contravention of the requirements outlined herein.
Potential consequences	Any policy subject to the terms of the Policy on Administrative Policies not developed through the proper procedures outlined herein shall not be considered official Salem State University policy.
How to report	Contact designated policy officer

7. Reference Documents

Policy or Document	Web Address
Naming Opportunities and	https://records.salemstate.edu/policies
Gift Recognition	

8. Contact(s)

Subject	Office or Position	Telephone Number	Email
Policy Clarification	Mandy Ray, Vice President, Advancement and Executive Director of the Salem State University Alumni Association and Foundation, Inc.	978.542.7591	mray@salemstate.edu

9. Effective Date: Initiated September 23, 2013. Amended and restated as of October 15, 2025.

10. Dissemination: Posted on the university website.

11. Review Cycle: As necessary.



NAMING OPPORTUNITIES AND GIFT RECOGNITION GUIDELINES

FOR SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY

Responsible Office: Advancement Office
Responsible Officer: Vice President, Advancement

Approved by Salem State University:
September 23, 2013

Amended and restated as of October 15, 2025

(Supersedes all previously approved related documents)

Effective: October 2025

352 Lafayette Street, Salem, MA 01970
Telephone 978.542.7591

Salem State University

Naming Opportunities and Gift Recognition Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to develop university-wide guidelines for gift naming opportunities and service recognition naming opportunities at Salem State University.

I. Introduction

Salem State University and the Salem State University Alumni Association and Foundation, Inc. (AAF), seek private funds to enhance the university's ability to meet the higher education needs of the community, particularly toward a level of excellence that would otherwise not be possible given state funding levels and restraints on student tuition and fees.

The AAF and the university will provide appropriate recognition to donors for their generosity. Recognition may take many forms, and this policy seeks to establish guidelines for the naming of facilities, programs and funds.

The opportunity to recognize an individual, a family, a foundation, or a corporation by naming a space on campus or naming a fund is a matter of common practice among the more than 5,000 institutions of higher education in the United States.

II. Policies and guidelines

The following are policies and guidelines for the naming of facilities, programs and funds. They are designed to accommodate unpredictable situations and donor expectations while keeping the Salem State mission and policies at the fore in making decisions.

All naming opportunities are negotiable, and the Salem State University Alumni Association and Foundation, Inc. recognizes that, notwithstanding this policy, the Board of Trustees of the university retains discretion to make exceptions or alter criteria or conditions as appropriate to the circumstances. There are innumerable ways the university may recognize an individual, a family, a foundation, or a corporation, just as there are many different types of contributions that are made.

General guidelines:

- The naming of any physical facility, campus grounds or academic program is usually only appropriate when a significant contribution has been received.
- Donor recognition does not need to be tied directly to a gift for that specific building or improvement, academic unit or endowment.
- Significant unrestricted gifts can be recognized through naming opportunities.
- MSCBA bonded projects that are supported by student usage fees (residence hall, for example) bear minimal direct cost to the university. Therefore, donors who support such projects may make their gifts 'unrestricted' to the university.
- The naming of buildings owned by the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) may require approval from the Board of Higher Education.
- The merits of naming any physical facility, space, academic program, or endowed fund should be determined by carefully weighing a person's high scholarship, devotion or distinguished service, and should be able to stand the test of time. Naming opportunities should be valued based on benchmarks, taking into consideration historical value and location of space.
- Signage for naming opportunities could take up to six months to install.
- The minimum amount required to establish a named endowed fund is \$50,000. This policy, which pertains to scholarship funds and other similar student, faculty and

program support funds, was instituted on March 26, 2007. Endowment funds with lower levels were established prior to this and are grandfathered as endowed funds.

- Donors may wish to establish a named temporary fund for faculty support, financial aid or other funding priorities. Under such an agreement, the donor commits to providing an annual gift equivalent to the income from an endowment for a fixed period of time, at a minimum of three years.
- All naming requests should support the honorees or donors' intent to meet the highest values and societal standards.

III. Types of gifts for naming commitments

Any and all combinations of gifts and pledges are acceptable for naming commitments. A naming opportunity may, be accepted for existing, unnamed opportunities not requiring major remodeling or renovation.

IV. Guidelines for naming physical facilities

- Buildings, campus grounds or other campus facilities will generally not be named for individuals currently employed by the university, unless a donor provides a sufficient gift in honor of that individual.
- When the person to be honored is living and no financial gift is being provided, at least three years should pass since any formal association with Salem State. Such affiliation includes time spent as a student, a compensated member of the faculty or staff, a volunteer board member, or a devoted public servant.
- Naming a building, wing, room, or lecture hall can be difficult, depending on size, age, prestige, location, original cost, etc. Recommendations on naming values are made by the vice president of advancement, or his or her designee, in concert with the president and senior administrators, with ultimate review/approval from the Board of Trustees.
 - Facilities, rooms, and grounds built by MSCBA, DCAMM or that are university owned and operated can be named and funds may be directed by the donor or honoree for the benefit of Salem State University.
 - Unscheduled or unplanned facilities that a donor proposes to have constructed will require a 100 percent gift commitment, plus a fully endowed maintenance fund.

V. Guidelines for naming programs

In order to name a center, program or academic unit, the gift should be proportional to the amount of endowment (for example, principal times 4 percent annual payout, in accordance with the AAF's spending policy at the time of this vote) that would be necessary to sustain or propel the program to new heights on a permanent basis.

However, if an academic program is being named for someone of unparalleled scholarly distinction, that name should bring great honor as well as "promise" to the program, so that the naming is a value-added act of good will and thoughtfulness, as well as a magnet for additional financial resources.

Opportunities also exist to establish named endowment funds in support of faculty, student or academic priorities.

VI. Approval process for naming of facilities or programs

All permanently named facilities and programs of \$100,001 or greater value should be reviewed and approved by the president of the university, Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the vice president of advancement in concert with the SSU AAF, where

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appropriate, and ultimately subject to the approval requirements listed below. Gifts of \$100,000 or less are recommended by the vice president of advancement to the university president for approval.

The executive director of the Salem State University Alumni Association and Foundation, Inc. has the authority to review and approve names of support funds, such as scholarship endowments, on behalf of the AAF.

The following principles shall be fully adhered to in the naming process:

- All proposed names for buildings and other facilities are held confidentially during the review and approval process. There should be a minimum of communication about the proposed naming before appropriate approval has been granted.
- The university is responsible for maintaining a record of named rooms, buildings, grounds, and other spaces, in addition to endowed funds.
- Naming commitments and, in fact, all major gifts, whether recognized by naming rights or not, are reflections on the values and reputation of Salem State University. Accordingly, each gift and naming commitment should be reviewed carefully for full compliance with applicable laws and ethical principles. This is especially true where there is some direct or indirect business or other continuing relationship between the donor and the university, its officers or employees. Any questions about the applicability of state or federal laws on conflicts of interest and other ethical considerations should be referred to appropriate legal counsel.
- Once the naming opportunity is approved at all required levels, a formal gift agreement is executed by the AAF, outlining parameters of the gift in support of the university (as well as the nature of the named recognition).
- Recognition steps are then set in motion, including appropriate media announcements, signage installation, campus ceremonies, etc. (consistent with the wishes of the donor, the level of support he/she is providing, and the university's recognition ceremony guidelines). It is important to note that, throughout the review and approval process, the donor's intentions should be held in strict confidence.

VII. Timeframe for pledge gifts

Endowed gifts have five years to reach the minimum endowment funding level of \$50,000. For endowment pledges that do not reach the minimum level within the five-year period, the donor or representative of the gift will be consulted to determine the most useful course of action, which may include a pledge extension or the transfer of the fund to the unrestricted endowment fund.

Naming will take place once a minimum of 51% of the pledge is fulfilled. In the event the pledge of cash (including, but not limited to charitable gift annuities), by a donor is not fulfilled in accordance with the signed letter of intent, the university reserves the right to ask the donor(s), or his or her representative, to forfeit the naming opportunity at Salem State University. Deferred pledge agreements or bequests will not be recognized with a naming.

VIII. Termination of naming agreement

The university may terminate an agreement and all rights and benefits of the donor(s) or honoree(s), including terminating the naming, in the unlikely event the university determines in its reasonable and good faith opinion that circumstances have changed such that the naming chosen would inflict damage to the university's reputation, standing, or integrity, or be contrary to university values

Upon such termination of agreement and/or the naming, the university and the AAF have no obligation or liability to the donors and are not required to return any portion of the gift already paid. The president and the AAF may, however, have discretion on determining an alternative recognition for the portion of the gift already received, if appropriate.

Also, if a named space is ever transferred or conveyed from the university, closed, deconstructed, destroyed or severely damaged, relocated, or replaced, then the naming will cease. In addition, if the named space is ever significantly renovated, upgraded or modified at a significant cost to the university then the naming will cease.

In such event, however, the Board of Trustees for gifts of \$100,001 and the president for all gifts under \$100,000, will have the right, for no additional payment, to designate the name of another available and equivalent university facility related to the purpose of the original gift intent. If the original donors are living and competent, they would be consulted by the university to discuss mutually agreed upon space. All naming right agreements will provide for termination details as outlined in the above policy.

IX. Approval and review of this policy

The naming opportunities and gift recognition policy is reviewed with the Board of Trustees and Alumni Association and Foundation Board of Directors as new fundraising plans are initiated for a campaign, when specific fundraising initiatives are launched or as the vice president of advancement or university president deem necessary. Revisions to the policy are subject to approval by a vote of the Board of Trustees.

A1. ADDENDUM: Guidelines for installing and naming campus benches

Addendum approved by the University President for inclusion on December 14, 2015

Bench naming opportunities are to be sited as donor wishes arise, rather than mapping out the full campus in advance. Bench naming opportunities are offered at two gift levels according to the below standard operating procedures. Below gift levels are suggested at several times the anticipated cost of purchase/installation in order to direct funds to three places: (1) bench purchase/installation including dedicatory plaque, (2) the donor's programmatic interest, and (3) a maintenance fund to be created.

1. Custom design new bench – \$100,001 gift or greater
 - Designed in consultation with landscape architect for the existing space
 - Named in perpetuity, with university committing to lifetime maintenance
 - University retains right to remove or relocate as needed but pledges to consult with the donor first (this would likely only happen in the event of major construction on the bench site)
2. Standard design new bench – \$50,000 gift or greater
 - Follows standard design appropriate to that campus' architectural vernacular as determined by Facilities (e.g. for North Campus, this would be the wooden benches lining the library quadrangle; Central Campus would be similar, but likely somewhat different)
 - Tribute expires with the life of the bench, a minimum of 10 years; university will pay for maintenance and one replacement, if needed, within the 10-year window
 - At tribute expiration, donor has right of first refusal to renew at current full Tier Two rate
 - University retains right to remove or relocate bench as needed