

# VRA Development Committee Manual

Last revised: June 2006

## Charge:

To recommend to the Executive Board fund-raising ventures and the means to implement them; to coordinate all fund-raising activities for the Visual Resources Association authorized by the Executive Board; and to undertake and monitor grant writing activities for the Association.

## Committee Structure:

The Committee shall consist of a Chair or two Co-Chairs, the Past President, current Treasurer, and at least four additional members.

The term of office for the Chair or Co-Chairs will be two years, renewable.

The Past President serves on the Development Committee for a one-year term, renewable.

The Treasurer serves in an *ex officio* capacity.

Other members may join the committee for a one-year term, renewable.

The VRAffle Coordinator is also a member of the Development Committee. The VRAffle Coordinator does not participate in the annual conference fundraising campaign, but focuses on organizing the annual VRAffle fundraising event.

A representative from the SEI (Summer Educational Institute) also is a member of the Development Committee. The SEI rep does not participate in fundraising for the annual VRA conference, but serves as a communication link between the two Development Committees. SEI fundraising is done independently, but in consultation with the VRA Development Committee, in order to avoid over-soliciting of contacts.

Currently there is no formal representative from the Travel Awards Committee (TAC) on Development, but it is recognized that the activities of the TAC in soliciting for corporate Travel Awards, and in running the annual Tansey Event at the conference are key fundraising/development activities, and there is a need to maintain close communication with the Chair (or Co-Chairs) of this committee.

## Responsibilities of the Chair (or Co-Chairs):

The Chair (or Co-Chairs) shall:

1. organize and run an annual fund-raising campaign, involving the group of committee members who are participating in vendor solicitations, to solicit financial support for the annual conference, including sponsorship of events, conference program ads, and solicitation of vendors for Exhibition Hall. Ensure that any offers of in-kind donations (products and/or services) from companies or businesses are directed to the attention of the VRAffle coordinator.
2. work with the VP for Conference Programming to coordinate fundraising campaign materials and documentation, insuring that updated information is available about costs for sponsoring events, exhibiting, placing ads, etc.

3. work with the Chair (or Co-Chairs) of the Travel Awards Committee to ensure that their fundraising for travel awards is coordinated with Development Committee fundraising for the conference.
4. ensure that the fundraising work of the committee is accomplished. Communicate with committee members who are involved in the fundraising campaign to ensure that they are informed of their list of sponsors for the conference campaign, that they know the timeline for beginning and completing their work, and that they have the information available to answer any questions posed to them by potential sponsors. Answer questions and provide guidance to committee members during fundraising campaign as needed. (see Appendix I, "Helpful Hints".)
5. Prepare donor recognition lists for the conference program, VRA Bulletin, conference website, and other venues in consultation with the Treasurer and VP for Conference Planning.
6. acknowledge all individual and corporate donations as reported by the Treasurer, via a brief thank-you letter (paper, not email). The letter should state the amount donated, for what purpose, and include the tax advisory statement. (Thank-you letter templates should be made available in documentation passed on to new Chairs.) Currently, one of the Co-Chairs handles the individual donation thank-you letters and the other Co-Chair writes the corporate thank-you letters after the conference. The Treasurer should report any donations of \$400 or more to the President for acknowledgment with a personal letter.
7. Develop and maintain target lists of potential donors, drawing on committee members' and Executive Board members' suggestions. New prospects are added throughout the year as received – after attendance at various conferences, or from business contacts at members' home institutions. Donor lists are reviewed and updated annually. Committee members are asked to make recommendations on inactive donor names to be removed from active solicitation lists.
8. submit annual and mid-year reports to the Executive Board describing the Committee's activities and accomplishments, and submit any recommendations to the Executive Board for approval.
9. submit a budget request for the committee, as part of the mid-year report submitted to the Executive Board. This budget should include a budget for VRAffle materials and supplies, and a postage budget for thank-you letters.
10. hold at least one business meeting per year, typically at the annual conference; prepare the agenda and lead such meetings. Select a recorder to take minutes, and distribute these to the Committee members afterwards. Attendance by the Chair or Co-Chairs and members at the annual meeting is expected.
11. recruit new committee members as needed. Transitions in committee membership typically take place at the annual meeting.
12. maintain files and documentation of Development Committee procedures. This includes review and updating of the Development Committee manual every two years. Appropriate documentation should be forwarded to the succeeding Chair or Co-Chairs, and archived as appropriate. Annual Reports are posted on the Members Only page of the VRA web site [<http://www.vraweb.org>]. Committee reports are to be deposited in the Association's archives.
13. Undertake grant writing as requested by the VRA Board for specific events and/ or projects.

## **Responsibilities of the VRA Executive Board vis-à-vis the Development Committee:**

The VRA Executive Board shall:

1. oversee fundraising activity
2. work with the Development Chair (or Co-Chairs) to identify and approve any new Chair or Co-Chair. Leadership transitions typically take place at the annual meeting.
3. set fundraising priorities in consultation with Development Chair (or Co-Chairs).
4. approve fundraising materials - brochures, correspondence, donor categories, etc. based on the recommendations of the Development Committee with input from the Treasurer and Membership Director
5. set procedures and venues for donor recognition.
6. personal acknowledgment letters to donors of \$400. or more are sent by the VRA President.

## **VRA Development Committee Guidelines**

### **A. Fundraising purposes**

1. Annual conference
  - a. Special events, conference sessions, and workshops
  - b. Conference program
  - c. Audiovisual equipment rental
  - d. General conference support
2. Tansey Educational Fund
  - a. Purpose of fund: previous to 2000-2001, served as revenue source for Tansey Travel Awards only; now designated more broadly as an "educational" fund, for uses such as workshops and other professional development events, in addition to Travel Awards.
  - b. Revenue source: originally begun as a major gift from Mrs. Luraine Tansey and her husband, accruing interest over the years. Donations are also solicited each year from Association members, during the annual membership drive. The Tansey Event and the VRAffle are the two major annual fundraising activities for the Tansey Educational Fund. Profits from each of these events are directed to the fund.
  - c. How funds are spent: the Executive Board determines the number and amount of travel awards given annually. The Executive Board considers funding of other educational opportunities on a yearly basis.
3. President's Fund
  - a. Purpose of fund: serves as a discretionary account for use as needed by the Association; uses will include partial funding for conferences, publications, board meetings, and travel. Funds will be disbursed at the discretion of the Executive Board.
  - b. Revenue source: donations from individual Association members; portions of Contributing and Patron Memberships in excess of \$80.00 are directed into the President's Fund.
  - c. How funds are spent: funds are dispersed at the direction of the Association President and Executive Board.

## B. Fundraising goals

## C. Fundraising sources

### 1. VRA individual members:

#### a. Modes of contribution:

- 1) Direct gifts to President's Fund or Tansey Educational Fund.
- 2) Contributing Memberships: \$150 - \$299 annual membership dues.  
Patron Memberships: \$300 or more annual membership dues.

[For Patron and Contributing Memberships, \$80. goes towards the individual's VRA membership, and any funds in excess of that amount are directed into the President's fund as an individual contribution.]

- 3) Tickets to the Tansey Event. Any funds received above the cost of the event are added to the Tansey Fund.
- 4) donations of handmade or unique items to the VRAffle, and purchase of VRAffle tickets at annual conference

#### b. How solicited:

- 1) A letter from the Development Chair (or Co-Chairs) included in the annual membership renewal mailing to all current members encourages individual members to make a donation to the Tansey Fund, or President's Fund, or to renew as a Contributing or Patron member, and also reminds members of the need for their support of the annual Tansey Event at the conference.
- 2) VRAffle Coordinator solicits in-kind donations to the VRAffle from individual members.

### 2. VRA Chapters

#### a. Modes of contribution:

- 1) Chapters are solicited for contributions to the Tansey Fund, or
- 2) for general support for the annual conference.

#### b. How solicited:

- 1) The Development Chair (or Co-Chairs) contact each of the Regional Chapter Chairs (usually by email) to solicit donations. This is done in the fall prior to an upcoming conference, so that Chapters may consider and vote on these donations at their fall meetings.

### 3. Members' home institutions

#### a. Direct contributions (for example, Rice University's grant in 2001 to underwrite the cost of publishing the conference program.)

#### b. How solicited:

- 1) These are special donations arranged by someone who has a personal contact with a specific institution, often a VRA Executive Board member. These are often one-time donations, made when an annual conference is in that institution's city.

### 4. Corporate donors

#### a. Donation opportunities:

- 1) Annual conferences – including general conference support, special events support, conference program advertising fees
- 2) in-kind donations (products and/ or services) to VRAffle
- 3) Corporate Travel Awards – this program is run by the Travel Awards Committee (TAC). The Development Committee works with the TAC to compile a list of corporate contacts, and to ensure that the timing of their solicitation does not overlap with the Development Committee's annual conference fundraising campaign.

#### b. How solicited:

- 1) For 1) and 2) above, solicitation is carried out by the Development Committee members who are part of the conference fundraising team, the Development Chair (or Co-Chairs), and in some cases may be carried out by Executive Board members. Such solicitation is carried out during the course of the fundraising campaign for the annual conference.

- 2) For 3) above, Corporate Travel Awards are solicited by the Travel Awards Committee in consultation with the Development Chair (or Co-Chairs).
- c. Corporate recognition:
  - 1) Recognition is given in the conference program, on the conference web site, and at any sessions or events that a corporate sponsor may underwrite. Corporate donors are also listed on the Donors page of the VRA website throughout the year of their donation.

#### D. Fundraising Tools

1. The Development Committee listserv is hosted by Rebecca Moss at the University of Minnesota. It has a password-protected archive dating back to June 2003 when the listserv was first created. The URL is: <https://mail.socsci.umn.edu/mailman/listinfo/vra-dev>
2. Helpful Hints document – see Appendix 1.
3. The Development Committee Manual reflects current practice and should be referred to in case of any procedural questions.

#### E. Grant Writing

Foundation and government agency grants are significant potential sources of funding for the VRA. However, the Development Committee has not been handling grants for the past few years. The writing of any grant should be reviewed by the Executive Board as needed, and proceed in the following manner:

a. *Project Identification.* Projects suitable for grants may be identified by anyone within the Association; they should be cleared through the Development Committee, which will recommend projects to the Board as part of its semi-annual report or as needed for proposals with shorter time frames. Using the Committee as a project identification clearing house will prevent duplication of effort, and raise the visibility of the process. Projects suitable for grants include support of specific publications, support of travel for educational purposes, honoraria for non-VRA speakers at conferences, and so on. Project identifiers should bear in mind the lengthy time line for grants writing and reporting, which may be 2 years or longer. Very few foundations or government agencies will approve funding for a project after the fact.

b. *Agency Identification.* Foundations and government agencies have very specific criteria for distributing their funds. Pairing a project with a closely-matched funding source may be the most time-consuming part of the grants-writing process. Agencies may be identified through foundation directories, corporate contacts, government fliers, on-line announcement, and Internet search engines. The guidelines for each potential funding source should be read carefully. Once the Development Committee has made a project recommendation to the Board, and the Board has approved, a Grant Writer should be named. This person will be responsible, both to the Development Committee and to the Board, for identifying an appropriate funding source, preparing the necessary documents, and insuring that the proper deadlines are met.

c. *Naming a Grant Writer.* The Development Committee is responsible for finding a Grant Writer for all proposals. This person can be the one who initiated the idea or someone else whose skills meet the criteria below. The Grant Writer should ideally be someone with a depth of knowledge about the project being funded, and good communication skills. The Grant Writer is responsible for contacting the potential granting agency, obtaining the necessary guidelines, preparing the required documentation, and reporting to the agency and the Board. The Grant Writer should be prepared to report to the Development Committee and the Board as often as needed to keep the Association's administrative bodies aware of the progress of the grants process. The Grant Writer should also be prepared to act as the primary contact between and among the project,

the Association, and the granting agency. The Development Committee will provide support to the grant writer by maintaining an archive of all past grant applications along with the brochures, guidelines, etc. that grant agencies distribute. It will also provide guidelines and strategies for grant writing including examples of standard "boilerplate" text that most grant agencies require.

d. *Writing a Grant.* Once the draft of a grant and a proposed budget are written, these should be proofread by the Association Treasurer, who then reports back to the Board. Alternately, the Board or the Association President may proofread the grant and budget. The Grant Writer should not, under any circumstances, send out grant documentation that has not been approved by the Board or its designated representative.

e. *Reporting.* Foundations and government agencies have different reporting requirements. All require a project budget, and all require a final accounting. These are the responsibility of the Grant Writer. Grant funds should be reported as part of the Association's annual budget, as deemed appropriate by the Treasurer.

## APPENDIX 1

**NOTE:** This document is presented here in template form only. It is intended for use by Development Chairs/Co-Chairs in order to provide committee members with a summary of key information for use during the annual conference fundraising campaign. As specific details do change from year to year, the Development Chair/Co-Chairs are responsible for updating the web links and contact info each year and distributing the updated document to committee members.

### VRA DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE Helpful Hints For Development Committee Members Annual Conference Sponsorship Campaign

#### INTRODUCTION

When talking/emailing with the potential sponsors on your assigned contacts list, many different questions may arise. The “hints” below were drawn up to help clarify the different options for sponsorship that you may want to suggest to your contacts. Some companies are annual participants in our conference, while others may simply not be interested in participating, no matter how many ingenious opportunities you may suggest. Approach your contacts with an open mind and you may be pleasantly surprised!

#### WHAT TO DO IF . . .

##### **... the Prospect is unsure**

A potential sponsor who is unsure may be prompted to participate once they learn who else has already committed to participating in the conference. We will send out email updates to the DEV listserv so that everyone who is involved in conference fundraising will be up-to-date on sponsorships and donations obtained.

If you've made initial contact with a prospect on the phone, ask permission to submit a written (email) proposal for their consideration. Sending to someone's personal email is much more productive than sending to an “info@... ” address, and Development can re-use this email contact again next year!

Before sending out a proposal, do some research on the company. Get a sense of their mission, objectives, and interests -- plenty information can easily be found on company websites. Tailor the proposal to the prospect's specific interests and explain the benefits provided by VRA. Sponsor recognition information is given in the online sponsorship information document at <provide URL>

Once a donation has been made, sponsor logos and links to sponsor websites are displayed on the conference web site at <provide URL>

##### **... the Prospect tries to “bargain” for additional benefits**

Tactfully explain that the VRA doesn't give away mailing lists, exhibition hall tables or publications as benefits; nor can the VRA accept in-kind gifts in lieu of a cash payment for Exhibition Hall fees. If the prospect persists, contact <name>, V. P. for Conference Programming <email address>.

**... the Prospect cannot do anything that involves cash payment**

Suggest they consider an in-kind donation of products and/or services to the VRAffle. Doing so does not involve any cash outlay on their part, and gets their product out into the hands of a valuable user group. You might mention that several companies have done this for the past few years. If the potential donor doesn't want to ship products to the conference site, donating a gift certificate for their products or services is also quick and easy for them, and is something that is valued by our conference attendees.

Be sure to contact our VRAffle coordinator Patti <patricia.mcrae@unlv.edu> if you secure an agreement from a vendor to provide something for our VRAffle. She can work with these donors to finalize shipping details etc. Also be sure to let DEV co-chairs <provide names> know, so that we can keep track of donations made.

**... the Prospect wants to Exhibit at the Conference**

The Exhibit Hall is being handled by the VP for Conference Planning < give name>. Those companies who have decided to exhibit should contact her at <email address> to make their space reservations and arrangements for payment.

Some contacts may not be sure what the Exhibit Hall is all about. You can provide an explanation, and perhaps help them reach a decision about exhibiting. Prepare in advance to discuss exhibit hall operations by familiarizing yourself with the details provided (costs, etc.) in the online Exhibitors' Portfolio at <provide URL>. The Exhibitor Reservation & Payment Form are also included here <provide page #>

Be sure that potential Exhibitors are clear on the basics. A few details worth reiterating are:

- Dates: The Exhibit Hall runs for <provide # of days> only, <provide dates>.
- Deadline: There is an absolute deadline of <provide deadline date> for receipt of the Exhibition Hall Reservation form.
- If asked if there is a contract for exhibitors, the "Terms and Agreement" section of the Exhibition Hall Reservation form serves as such.
- Because of the need for a signed contract (see above), there is no online registration for the Exhibit Hall; exhibitors must submit completed paper forms containing their signature.

**... the Prospect wants to Advertise in the Conference Program**

Let them know that advertising in the program provides great visibility, as the program is frequently consulted throughout the conference by all attendees! You may also want to go over advertising prices. These are provided in the Sponsorship Information document <provide URL>

Remind advertisers that there is a deadline <provide date> for receipt of payment and camera-ready artwork!

The prospect should then contact <give name> <give email address> to make detailed arrangements for their advertisement (submission of artwork, questions about electronic format etc.)

**... the Prospect is interested in providing product/service information**

For companies who don't wish to exhibit or advertise, a literature display is a simple option for getting their product information out to a target audience. Price information for displaying company catalogues, pamphlets etc. is listed in the Sponsorship Information document <provide URL>. However, companies may display up to 100 catalogues (multi-page booklets), or up to 750 brochures without payment of a fee.

**... the Prospect AGREES to make a donation**

Send out a confirmation email to the prospect and “cc” the following:

<name> (VRA Treasurer)            <provide email address>  
<name> (DEV Co-Chair)           <provide email address>  
<name> (DEV Co-Chair)           <provide email address>

**Sample Sponsor Confirmation email**

Dear <Contact Name>:

Following up on our conversation today, I would like to thank you for agreeing to sponsor <provide name of event> at the 200\_ VRA conference. Your commitment of <state \$ amount> is greatly appreciated. [*You can elaborate here as much as you want, depending on the circumstances, but please make sure you clearly state the dollar amount of the donation and its intended purpose.*]

Please make out your check to the Visual Resources Association, and send it to the following address:

<name>, VRA Treasurer  
<Building and Room Number>  
<Name of College>  
<City, State>

You will be receiving a receipt from the VRA Treasurer.

The VRA would like to recognize your sponsorship by posting a copy of the <Company Name> logo on the Sponsors’ page of our conference web site. Your logo will appear on the site from the time that we receive your donation, until the end of the conference on <provide month, day, year>.

<Company Name> will also be given recognition on our list of donors in our conference program, and your company logo will also appear in that program, which is the on-site guide to the conference used by all attendees.

Again, on behalf of the VRA, we are so pleased with your participation in our annual conference. Your support is valued very much!

Sincerely,

<your name>  
VRA Development Committee

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## APPENDIX 2

The following information is provided to give incoming Chairs and committee members a sense of how the annual cycle of activity currently works for the Development Committee. Generally the most busy time of year is between January and March when the fundraising campaign for the annual conference takes place.

### Development Annual Activity Cycle

early July: Development Committee Mid-Year report is due. Chairs/Co-chairs receive notification via email in advance of the report's due date

early September: annual membership mailing: Co-Chairs submit electronic copy of a letter asking for individual donations. (With the switch to online "memberClicks" renewal, there may be some changes in how this is organized.)

October, November: work with V.P. for Conference Planning to make sure information is being gathered about conference sponsorship expenses and fees for 2007, so that it is in place for distribution to DEV committee members. DEV co-chairs should confer about the list of sponsors and how to divide it up among our members, and decide on when to have committee members begin contacting their sponsors.

Fall postcard mailing: This is a conference announcement postcard. Work with PR/ Communications officer to include text about exhibition and sponsorship opportunities.

January - early March: sponsors' campaign for the annual conference in progress.

late January – early February: Annual report is due.

March: conference time!

April: post-conference thank-you letters, administrative tasks related to changes in leadership, new members coming on board, etc.