

Philanthropic Naming Policy

Category: External Relations

Approval Authority: Board of Governors

Responsibility: Vice-President, External Relations and Development

Date of last revision: March 25, 2011: revised February 6, 2026

While both philanthropic and non-philanthropic naming processes share many common principles, honorific and wayfinding Campus Names are covered under the Policy on Campus Names. Gift acceptance is also addressed under the Gift Acceptance Policy.

Definitions:

Donor: An individual, corporation, foundation or organization who/that contributes financially to a charitable cause without expectation of direct return.

Denaming: The process of revoking a designated name initially conferred upon a physical, academic or programmatic asset.

Endowment: A financial contribution that is invested by the University in order to create an expendable income stream.

Philanthropic Naming: The process of conferring a name upon a physical, academic or programmatic asset as a result of a donation.

Philanthropy: The effort to increase the well-being of humankind, commonly through charitable contributions and voluntarism.

Purpose/Reason for Policy:

The naming of university activities or property is a long-established custom at Trent University, dating back to its inception. From named Chairs and awards to named buildings and gardens, Trent University welcomes the opportunity to recognize those who have rendered outstanding support to the University.

In particular, Trent University welcomes the opportunity to recognize individuals and organizations whose generous philanthropy makes possible the construction or restoration of buildings, the establishment of endowments, the development of innovative programs and, in general, the advancement of the University's mission.

This policy provides a framework for the granting of named philanthropic recognition at Trent University:

- the need to provide a protocol for establishing recognition to those who render outstanding benefaction to the University;
- the need to promote consistency in the tributes paid by the University to its supporters;
- the need to ensure appropriate utilization of the available naming opportunities;

- the need to provide guidelines for those involved in discussions with donors
- the need for measures to protect the academic integrity and reputation of the university

Scope of this Policy:

This policy guides the granting of named philanthropic recognition at Trent University for:

Physical assets such as:

- buildings or parts of buildings e.g wings, floors, atriums, rooms, laboratories)
- Roadways, discrete spaces, other structures
- special research, teaching, recreational, service or other facilities
- Common or green spaces

Nonphysical assets such as:

- faculties, departments, schools or other academic units, research centres, institutes or programs
- programs of service or recreation
- lectureships, special lecture series, and awards
- fellowships, scholarships, bursaries, prizes and other student awards
- endowed or limited duration chairs, professorships
- collections of books, art or other materials
- such other entities as the University may from time to time see fit to name

Policy Statement:

This policy and its related procedures govern philanthropic naming, renaming and denaming at Trent University.

Principles and Responsibilities:

1. Ultimate authority to accept or decline any proposal to name at Trent University rests with the Board of Governors. In the case of named academic appointments (i.e. Chairs, Professorships), named academic initiatives (e.g. lecture series or major scholarships), or significant named areas of academic life, details of the naming and/or terms of reference will be developed in consultation with academic representatives. Endowed Chairs and Professorships Program terms are managed by a separate policy.
2. Ultimate authority to discontinue the designated name of a building, room, area or program (i.e. denaming), or to transfer the name to another building, room, area or program, at Trent University rests with the Board of Governors.
3. Consistent with Trent University's *Gift Acceptance Policy*, the acceptance of any philanthropic donation which involves a proposal to name is conditional upon ultimate approval of the naming by the Board of Governors. Such approval may be provided in principle on the basis of a schedule of defined naming opportunities and the appropriate level of philanthropic donation required for each (see Procedure on Negotiation and Approval of Philanthropic Naming).

4. Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy, no naming will be approved or (once approved) continued that will call into serious question the public respect of the University or would otherwise not be in the best interests of the University, in the opinion of the Board. Preserving the academic integrity and reputation of the university is of fundamental importance.
5. No name will be approved that requires or directly implies the University's endorsement of a partisan political or ideological position or of a particular commercial product or service. This does not preclude the name of an individual who has at one time held public office or the name of an individual or a company that manufactures or distributes commercial products or services.
6. The University may choose to extend recognition through a naming (e.g. a named building) after a donor/donors, provided that the donor will provide a significant part of the cost of funding the facility or activity. Such recognition will generally take effect once the donor has fulfilled an appropriate portion of their commitment (see Procedure).
7. The value of a naming opportunity of a specific space should be determined by its size, location, and the activity taking place within the space. The value of a program, project, unit or centre should be determined by the numbers of users, the importance of the initiative to the University, and public profile of the program. Appropriate comparators will be used as benchmarks to ensure the valuation of the naming opportunities is accurate.
8. Subject to the terms of this Policy generally, and Sections 2 and 4 specifically, when permanent named recognition has been extended for a gift received, it is intended to be recognized in perpetuity. In the event of changed circumstances (e.g. a facility or program no longer exists) the University reserves the right to determine the form which such permanence may take, generally in consultation with the benefactor or their authorized representative(s) where appropriate.
9. From time to time, it may be appropriate to offer named recognition for a limited period. In this case, subject to the terms of this Policy, Trent intends to recognize the name for that period of time. At the end of the naming term, provided that continued or renewed recognition is deemed to be in the best interests of the University, the donor, or his/her designate, will be given an opportunity to provide additional support according to the new Terms of Reference.
10. Should changed circumstances lead to the denaming or renaming of a designated facility, program or other initiative, and provided that the University has in good faith fulfilled its original commitment to the benefactor, the University will be in no way obligated to return any portion of a charitably receipted gift to the donor.
11. Provisions in this policy that refer to naming for a donor also in general apply to naming for a third party at the wish of a donor.
12. Only in exceptional circumstances will facilities or activities be named in honour of members of faculty or staff while the honouree remains in the full-time employment of the University.
13. The External Relations and Development portfolio shall be responsible for maintaining and updating an inventory of named facilities and naming opportunities.
14. The Vice-President of External Relations and Development, or their designate, shall advise on consistent application of current, approved naming policies with respect to recognition of philanthropic donations.
15. The University reserves the right to decide on the physical displays which may accompany named recognition.

Contact Officer:

Associate Vice-President, Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement

Date for Next Review:

January 2031

Related Policies, Procedures & Guidelines

- a) Endowed Chairs and Professorships Program
- b) Fixed Term Professorship Program
- c) Gift Acceptance Policy
- d) Gifts of Publicly Traded Stocks & Securities
- e) Policy on Campus Names
- f) Procedure on Negotiation and Approval of Philanthropic Naming, Renaming and Denaming

Policies Superseded by This Policy:

- a) Policy on Campus Names, 1989