

## **INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY**

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In the summer of 2015, a Joint VRA and VRAF Task Force on Development and Fundraising was formed by the boards of VRA and VRAF to develop a strategy and a road map for identifying, planning, and implementing a portfolio of fundraising and development initiatives for both VRA and VRAF (see attached Appendix 1, the original charge and deliverables for the Task Force).

From September 2015 to January 2016, the Task Force had a total of four online meetings (via GoToMeeting). Each meeting was facilitated by a development/fundraising professional in the educational and research field. The fundraising topics for the subsequent three meetings were identified at the first brainstorming session, facilitated by Erika Shelburne, Senior Philanthropic Advisor and Director of International Giving, Amherst College. The following is a list of fundraising topics and facilitators/guests for the subsequent three meetings:

- Planned Giving: facilitated by Jimmy Marotto, Director, Office of Development, College of Arts and Sciences, University at Buffalo
- Grant Writing: facilitated by Caroline New, Associate Director of Donor Communications, Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Membership/Outreach & General Fundraising and Development Efforts Targeting Current Members/Constituents: facilitated by Erika Shelburne with guest participants: Elaine Paul, President of VRA, and Melanie Clarke, Chair of VRA Membership Committee

Detailed minutes of the meetings, together with the original charge and any draft and subsequent reports of the Task Force are being kept on VRA's Basecamp 2 site, under the special project, VRA-VRAF Joint Task Force: <https://basecamp.com/2196080/projects/10780578>

The topic of fundraising events were discussed at the brainstorming session, but Erika countered that events are a big investment of time and money with uneven return on investment. She believes that our current approach (i.e., a simple donor recognition event at the annual conference) would be adequate.

Although the Task Force didn't specifically discuss the details of the fundraising software, throughout our discussions, the Task Force members had developed a common understanding that a fundraising database and software should be created and shared by both VRA and VRAF. Specific details about potential software or programs were gathered from Linda Reynold, the former VRAF Director in charge of fundraising and development.

The following is an extensive list of fundraising and development options which can be employed and adopted by both VRA and VRAF. However, some of our suggested initiatives, particularly those in the planned giving, grant writing, and membership/outreach sections may need a few years to develop the necessary supporting structures, platforms, and relationships with current and prospective donors and constituents. However, the following fundraising options have been identified as attainable goals and objectives for the short term:

- Fine-tuning and implementing the calendar/timeline for both VRA and VRAF fundraising activities.
- Creating a list of donation and sponsorship options with brief descriptions for each for former and prospective donors and sponsors (including vendors).

- Selecting and implementing a shared fundraising database/software accessible by multiple VRA and VRAF officers. Preferably, the new database should have a good interface with VRAF’s CMS in the future; generating a list of past asks and resultant donations.
- Compiling a list of vendors/corporations which would be interested to join VRA as institutional members, including those suggested at the SEI meeting on fundraising and development, and send them invitations to join and/or donate.
- Developing a general framework/approach for planned giving; working with prospective donors who have approached either VRAF/VRA to develop a few planned-giving options; firming up the planned giving policies and procedures for VRA and VRAF; experimenting with matching or challenge options if applicable, particularly during the end-of-the-year fundraising campaign.
- Transitioning the promotion and coordination of the Amazon.com program from VRA Development Committee to VRAF.

For a longer term (i.e., in about two-three years), the following areas could be explored by the VRAF Director in charge of fundraising and development and VRA Development Committee, or by both VRA and VRAF boards:

- Establishing the grant writing platform and structure outlined below, and spreading the grant writing responsibilities among VRAF directors or VRA Development or other related committee members.
- Outlining the strategies of expanding our “offerings” to potential groups of members and subsequently our membership and donor base.
- Transferring VRA travel awards to VRA Development Committee for fundraising.

## **MEMBERSHIP/OUTREACH**

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- Efforts have been made by the Membership Committee to promote VRA in academic communities, such as libraries, museums, and archives. However, for other communities, such as sciences, medicine, digital asset management, and media, no initiatives have been made on that front.
- Data collected from our recent VRA Professional Status Survey may be able to help us to understand the makeup and some of the characteristics of our current membership, e.g., the survey questions related to our members’ affiliations to other professional organizations and their institutional affiliations. The results may help us to develop strategies to identify and recruit members from those groups.
- The VRAF Director for fundraising and development and a co-chair/member of the VRA Development Committee should work with the VRA Membership Committee to study the results of the Professional Status Survey and develop strategies to expand our current membership, which in turn, may expand our current fundraising and development base.
- Our “offerings” to those groups/communities for fulfilling their needs were also discussed. But, deliberate efforts have to be made to expand our current programs and activities to include those new areas, and it should be a concerted effort in the following areas:

- Conference program planning
  - VRAF educational programs (including SEI and Regional Workshops), internship and grants
  - VRA Education Committee
  - VRA Membership Committee
- A special task force consisted of members from those committees and VRAF should be formed to address the “offerings”/programming issues. Expanding our offerings and programming should be a part of both VRA’s and VRAF’s strategic plans.
  - Suggested potential groups or strategies for recruiting new members:
    - Association of Medical Illustrators
    - An imaging/media technical committee in VRA to cater the needs of the wider range of communities who are dealing with digital images and media
  - The VRAF Director for fundraising and development and the Co-chair of the Development Committee will compile a list of corporations, including those suggested at a recent SEI meeting on fundraising and development and by both VRA and VRAF officers via our personal connections. The VRAF Director for fundraising and development and the Co-chair of the Development Committee will work with the Chair of the VRA Membership Committee to draft an invitation-to-join letter, including donation options, to those corporations.

**GENERAL FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS TARGETING CURRENT MEMBERS/CONSTITUENTS**

- The group agreed that there should be more coordination between VRA and VRAF. We have a limited list of donors and corporate sponsors. The group has suggested that both VRA and VRAF should develop a yearly calendar/timeline for various fundraising activities and initiatives,

<b>Months</b>	<b>Fundraising Activities</b>	<b>Targeted Groups</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>July thru August</b>	Nil		
<b>Sept. thru Oct.</b>	VRAF Annual Fundraising Campaign	VRA general members and past VRAF donors	This is the current timeframe for VRAF, and the current theme is VRAF Rock Stars
<b>October thru March</b>	VRA membership renewals, incl. options for donations to VRA (i.e., General Operating Fund, Tansey, President’s Fund) and VRAF	VRA general members	
<b>Year round, particularly during</b>	VRAF Amazon.com shopping campaign	VRA general members	

<b>holidays season, Nov-Dec.</b>			
<b>November to March</b>	VRA Annual Conference Support (donations and sponsorship, incl. sponsorships/exhibitor fees from vendors, travel awards sponsored by major donors and vendors; Chapter support)	VRA vendors, major individual donors, VRA chapters	
<b>December</b>	VRAF year-end tax-deductible fundraising calls	VRA general members	Possibly just one or two emails.
<b>January thru March</b>	SEI: Sponsorship of events and receptions	VRA vendors and major individual donors	
<b>March/Early April</b>	VRAF donor recognition reception/informal gathering at the annual conference	VRAF donors	
<b>April through June</b>	Nil		

- The group also suggested that when approaching donors, we should provide them with a list of options, gathered from various fundraising events and purposes.
  - For VRA General/Individual Donors:
    - VRA General Operating Fund
    - VRA Tansey Travel Awards
    - VRA President’s Fund
    - VRA Travel Awards (named or anonymous)
    - VRAF General Operating Fund (currently donations to VRAF are not earmarked to specific grants or awards listed below)
    - VRAF Internship Award
    - VRAF Professional Development Grants
    - VRAF Project Grants for Research and Educational Projects
    - Sponsorships of events and receptions at annual conferences, SEI, and regional workshops
  - For Vendors and VRA Chapters:
    - Conference exhibitor or vendor sponsorship fees/packages
    - Sponsorships of events and receptions at:
      - Annual conferences (March/April)
        - Speaker fund, e.g., ARTstor’s IPR speaker fund
        - Sponsorships of receptions at the annual conferences
        - Travel awards, e.g., GallerySystems travel award, etc. (this option should be discouraged for vendors as their support

- should be directed to conference expenses instead of individual members)
  - SEI (June)
    - Sponsorships of receptions at SEI
  - Regional Workshops (Feb. & Aug): apart from Kress, we are not asking donations/sponsorships for Regional Workshops
- Sponsorships/donations from vendors (such as ARTstor, Art Resources) should be treated as their business expenses (as they have particular business objectives and goals they want to achieve, e.g., promotion and publicity of their products.) We should clearly indicate the benefits/returns of their donations/sponsorships.
- As suggested in this report, VRAF should take on the leadership role in grant application (see grant application section). However, as VRAF is also a charitable organization allowing tax deduction for donations contributed by members, it could be a very attractive option for our members who want to make tax deductible donations, particularly approaching the end of the calendar year.
- Also because of VRAF's tax exemption status, attracting members for making planned giving of significant amounts would normally fall within the purview of VRAF (see planned giving section).
- As the Amazon Smile program is no longer available for non-profit organizations without the 501 (c) 3 status, VRAF will assume the responsibilities of promoting and administrating the Amazon Smile program. The VRAF director in charge of fundraising and development will work with the co-chairs of the VRA Development Committee to coordinate the transition.
- The Task Force suggested that the general fundraising campaigns by VRA and VRAF could be used as vehicles to identify potential donors who would be more invested in VRA and VRAF (e.g., repeated donors of >\$100. Their personal goals and objectives could be more aligned with the missions and goals of VRA or VRAF). And, they could be approached by the Presidents and/or the Development Officers of VRA/VRAF for planned giving for specific purposes.
- Coaching/development of new generation of donors:
  - Via the Emerging Professional Committee
  - Acknowledge donors as Rock Stars by listing their names and donations under specific purposes.
  - Acknowledge any new donors in person by having an informal coffee gathering at the annual conference. It would be more personal and may motivate them to be repeated donors in the future.
  - Via other creative opportunities or themes, or capitalizing on circumstances that arises. Other options include donor challenges/matches.

## **Fundraising Software Shared by VRA and VRAF**

- The Task Force has suggested that a common fundraising software or database containing information of all prospective and past donors and their interactions with VRA and VRAF should be shared by both VRA and VRAF.
- The program or database should be cloud-based, accessible by multiple users, e.g.,:
  - Board members of VRA
  - Board members of VRAF
  - Members of VRA Development Committee
  - Members of the SEI Planning Committee
  - Any additional VRA/VRAF officers if needed
- Currently, VRAF is using a standalone version of the FundRaiser Basic. Although the software can be installed by multiple users, the data can only be manipulated by one single user. The following are options for upgrade:
  - Any one of the advanced products of FundRaiser Basic: e.g., FundRaiser Spark, Select, or Professional, <http://www.fundraiserbasic.com/growth-path/advancedproducts>
  - Blackbaud: entry level product, eTapestry, <https://www.blackbaud.com/fundraising-crm/etapestry-donor-management>
  - NeonCRM: <http://www.z2systems.com/>
  - DonorPerfect: <http://www.donorperfect.com/fundraising-software/nonprofits/smaller-nonprofit-fundraising-software.asp>
  - Flipcause: <https://www.flipcause.com/>
- The Task Force suggested that a sub-group should be formed to evaluate the above-mentioned products and provide the Boards with recommendations/procedures of migrating the current database to a new platform which will meet the above-mentioned needs and specifications.
- Proposed members of the sub-group:
  - VRAF Director for fundraising and development
  - VRAF Treasurer
  - Chair/Co-chair of the VRA Development Committee
  - VRA Treasurer/the other co-chair of the VRA Development Committee
  - Consultants, e.g., Linda Reynold, Ian McDermott, and John Trendler
- The Task Force has also suggested that the costs of implementing and maintaining the software would be shared equally by both VRA and VRAF (i.e., a 50-50 split).

## **PLANNED GIVING**

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The Task Force met with James Marotto, Director of the Office of Development, College of Arts and Sciences, University at Buffalo.

In cultivating planned giving, donations should be sought to support specific programs or purposes. (For example, for the University at Buffalo University Archives, funds were raised to pay students interns to process the archival backlog and ephemera in the collections.)

A menu of giving options could be developed, outlining the benefits and process for each:

### **Stock donation**

- *Benefits:*
  - The donor saves money on capital gain taxes, in addition to the tax-exemption amount for the estimated value of the donated stocks.
- *Considerations:*
  - Donated stocks should come from a separate account other than the donor's retirement/IRA account; otherwise, the donor may be penalized for potential early withdrawal of their retirement funds.
  - VRA/VRAF will need to create a stock receivable gift account in a brokerage firm to accept donated stocks.
  - There should be written policies in place for accepting and selling donated stocks, e.g., any donated stocks would be sold within a specific period of time after the transfer.
  - VRA/VRAF could simply state the number of stocks and their estimated value as the donation amount in the acknowledgement/thank-you letter.

### **Bequest**

- *Benefits:*
  - Bequests are straightforward: the donor assigns VRA/VRAF as a beneficiary in a life insurance or IRA retirement policy.
  - The donor or his/her beneficiaries could enjoy savings on both estate and income taxes, whereas cash or other liquid assets could be given to his/her family.
- *Considerations:*
  - A simple form could be created to indicate the approximate value or a percentage of their plans/policies under VRA/VRAF as a beneficiary.
  - Allocating a percentage of their life insurance policies or retirement plans tends to yield a larger amount of donation than a pre-determined fixed amount to charitable organizations.

### **Endowment**

- *Benefits:*
  - Creates long-term spendable income.
  - Multiple donors can contribute to a fund earmarked for specific activities and projects. Clear funding goals such as these are easier to promote in seeking donations.
- *Considerations:*

- Given the overhead costs and effort in establishing an endowment, James indicated that it may not be cost-effective if the endowment fund is less than \$25,000 or even \$50,000:
  - The normal drawdown/spending percentage from an endowment fund is about 4% (depending on the performance of the investment portfolio for the endowment, normally around 8%).
  - After deducting 0.5-1% of administrative expenses, approximately 3% of the growth would be reinvested into the principal so that the endowment fund will keep its current value in the future.)
  - For an endowment fund of \$25,000, it could potentially yield \$1,000/year for supporting a specific activity/initiative of VRA/VRAF.
- Although it has not been suggested as a top priority for VRA/VRAF fundraising, it could be an option if there are a few sizable donations from various individuals to form an endowment to support a specific program/project, e.g., pulling five individual donations of \$5000 each to form an endowment to support a VRA/VRAF program.

In conclusion, James reiterated that we should always link any planned giving to the needs and purposes of the organizations, instead of any targeted amount of fund.

Other useful resources:

- [www.plannedgiving.com](http://www.plannedgiving.com)
- The Ultimate Quick Reference Planned Giving Pocket Guide:  
<http://www.plannedgiving.com/planned-giving-pocket-guide>

## GRANT WRITING

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The Task Force met with Caroline New, Associate Director of Donor Communications, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

### **Identifying funding opportunities:**

Caroline emphasized the importance of using the mission and scopes of VRA and VRAF as guides in identifying and applying for grants; she advises this to avoid drifting from the goals of the organization or trying to set up projects just to appeal to a funder. Grants should support work already taking place without creating more unnecessary work. A needs assessment should be aligned with the missions and goals of the organization. She recommends identifying funding opportunities within the budget, identifying what kinds of projects exist within the current scope of the work, and which projects or initiatives would only be pursued if more resources were available (funding-dependent). Identifying discrete projects (e.g., service, equipment, and software/database) will help determine which grants would be appropriate. She suggests that grant-writing is part of the budgetary process: more funders are looking to designate support to specific projects with tangible, assessable outcomes, as is usually the case with project-based grants, as opposed to unrestricted support, though guidelines vary from funder to funder.

The Task Force members discussed their own experiences with identifying and applying for grants and participating in grant-funded programs. VRAF has experience working with the Kress Foundation for internships and regional workshops as well as SEI. Caroline advised that there are subscription-based and free resources for grants and that members should check with organizations for access to these, in particular the Foundation Directory Online (Foundation Center), which can help narrow down by geographical area, amount sought, etc. Other granting bodies mentioned were the Getty, IMLS, MacArthur, HPRC, NEH & NEA, Kress, and [Delmas Foundation](#).

**Grant calendar:**

Caroline advised creating a grant calendar to centralize information, plan for deadlines, and narrow down opportunities. A calendar might include:

- Deadlines
- Name of funder
- Contact at that organization
- Specific project name
- Guidelines/requirements/restrictions that are out the ordinary
- Amount of grant
- Capital support vs. operating support.

The calendar can be as simple as a spreadsheet and should be cloud-based or at least accessible by VRA and VRAF officers related to grant application. A cloud-based repository such as Basecamp or Google Drive can also collect documentation, i.e. copies of the guidelines, resumes of staff named as primary investigators, basic organization information about VRA and VRAF (mission, non-profit status), etc.

Caroline also noted that the initial point of contact is Letter of Inquiry/Introduction, addressed to the primary contact. This introduces the organization (i.e. VRA or VRAF) and project, states intent to apply for specific grant, and asks for information.

**Key elements of grant applications:**

- Questions funders most want answered
- Key elements: need statement, objectives, methods, evaluation plan, budget
- Stock language
- Supporting documents for appendices, such as strategic plans, letters of recommendation, resumes of key officers, etc.

Regardless of funder, key elements are fairly consistent. Stock language (e.g., mission, scope of work, needs statement) can be repurposed, and kept in shared repository. Each application can be started with work that has already done. The same goes for supporting documents, i.e., letters of recommendation may vary, but resumes, budgets, mission statement, tax exempt letter, W9, bylaws, articles of incorporation, etc., will be the same.

**Before applying, consider questions funders want answered:**

- What is the problem or need?
- How do you propose to solve it or fulfill need?
- Are there qualified people?
- How will you accomplish your plan?
- Measurable outcomes / metrics: how will you demonstrate success?

**Other considerations:**

- Examples of former successful grants: funders may share examples of former successful grant applications. Demonstrate that your organization is uniquely positioned to accomplish the project—make the application compelling, make the funder excited to be a part of it.
- Potential competition from other grant seekers: how to make your application stand out.
- Re-application is common:
  - Follow up and ask for feedback, i.e. reviewer’s comments, why not funded and what could be done differently.
  - Program officers are often open to sharing that feedback. Reapplying is encouraged.
  - Ask others outside of the organization to read it for right combination of technical language and marketing. Some grant funders will read a draft before final submission.
  - Even layout (e.g., font size and style) can affect the reader.
  - Demonstrate need, and demonstrate that you can successfully meet that need with the funder’s help.
- For every report awarded, a report will be required: have plan in place to write the report that demonstrates that the work was completed successfully.
- Decide whether application will be for matching funds or full funding.
  - Applying for matching funds can create momentum and demonstrate urgency. It depends on the funder as to whether they will match—check guidelines. (A challenge grant is similar to matching.)
  - Unrestricted operating funds might be used for something that is different every year, i.e. opening speaker, or sending a VRA member to another conference. In applying for unrestricted funds, it is a good idea to use past examples—a “project” could be “research and travel fund,” which would cover an opening speaker, a cross-pollination attendee, etc. \*If program is taking place in a specific place, search to include funders that have an interest in that specific area.
- Widen the pool of organizations to which VRA/VRAF applies for funding. Consider stability / repeat requests (i.e. Kress). Some funders will do renewable grants up to X number, e.g., 3 years, and then taking a year off. It is important to check guidelines for these restrictions. Some of the most successful applications come from repeat applicants who do well with their projects; cultivate a relationship with the funder, or invite the funder to lectures, etc.

## Appendix 1

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### Joint VRA and VRAF Task Force on Development and Fundraising

#### **Charge**

- Develop a strategy and a road map for identifying, planning, and implementing a portfolio of fundraising and developing initiatives for both VRA and VRAF.

#### **Deliverables**

- A proposal of recommendations addressing the following processes and issues, including but not limited to:
  - Division of labor between the two organizations in terms of fundraising and development activities.
  - Tentative schedule and timeline for the year-round fundraising opportunities vs. conference-related sponsorships.
  - Strategies of encouraging members to include VRAF in their estate planning process.
  - Tactics of Increasing engagement and support of the younger members.
  - Management of SEI “alumni relations” for fundraising purposes.
  - Grant applications.
  - Recommendations for a separate fundraising or integrated CMS and fundraising system for managing past, current, and potential sponsors or donors, and fundraising activities and workflow for both organizations.
  - Explore other possible fundraising activities or programs, such as a special social event for sponsors and donors at the annual conference similar to the Society Circle event at the ARLIS/NA annual conferences.

#### **Proposed Membership**

- VRA Representatives:
  - Marie Elia, Co-chair of Development Committee ((Co-chair of the Task Force)
  - Barbara Brenny, Co-chair of Development Committee
  - Chris Strasbaugh, VP for Conference Program
- VRAF Representatives:
  - Christine Hilker, Treasurer
  - Billy Chi Hing Kwan, Board Member (Co-chair of the Task Force)
  - Linda Reynolds, Board Member
- Consultant(s)\*:
  - Erika P. Shelburne, Senior Philanthropic Advisor and Director of International Giving, Amherst College

\*Erika suggested that instead of relying on one consultant to walk us through the entire process, we could approach several professionals in the development field and invite one of

them to the brainstorming session relevant to their expertise (i.e., grant writing, events, corporate sponsorship, estate planning). Erika indicates that it would be difficult to find a development officer who knows the entire range of issues pertaining to development and fundraising. And, many would be willing to volunteer an hour of their time on a pro-bono basis. Erika is willing to facilitate the first brainstorming session and a subsequent session on corporate sponsorship on a pro-bono basis. Apart from Macie Hall’s sister, both Barbara and I know a few development officers as well. We could approach them and find out their areas of expertise and availability.

***Tentative Timeline and Deliverables***

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>
By October 9, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact John Trendler to set up the basecamp site and the GoToMeeting account for the Task Force—ME</li> <li>• Send the draft charge and tentative timeline to task force members--BK</li> </ul>
Week of October 12, 2015	Kick-off meeting/brainstorming session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the approved charge and timeline.</li> <li>• Review of the VRA and VRAF Memorandum of Understanding.</li> <li>• Brainstorming session with Erika</li> </ul>
Week of October 26, 2015	Discussion of specific areas of fundraising, e.g., individual donor relationships, special individual donation arrangements, year-round fundraising programs for VRA and VRAF
Week of November 9, 2015	Discussion of specific areas of fundraising and development, e.g., conference and corporate sponsorships, and events.
Week of December 7, 2015	Discussion of specific areas of fundraising and development, e.g., grant writing and misc. issues, e.g., fundraising software
Mid-January, 2016	Preliminary report/draft proposal to the VRA and VRAF Boards for initial feedback and comments.
Mid-February, 2016	Meeting re: feedback and comments from the boards, and wrap up.
End of February 2016	Final proposal to the VRA and VRAF boards.