



Academic Library Friends:

A Toolkit for Getting Started – You Can Do This!

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August 2013

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DEFINITION OF “FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY”

What are Friends of the Library and what purpose do they serve in an academic library? What distinguishes a library Friends organization from other organizations on campus? I define Friends of the Library as an organization established to promote and financially support the resources, services, and needs of the academic library and to serve as advocates for the value of the library.

THE VALUE OF ACADEMIC FRIENDS

Library Friends have long played a vital role as a financial support group for public libraries. As academic libraries struggle to find financial support outside a formal budget process, the development of an academic library Friends group can be viewed as a positive strategy for many academic libraries. In fact, “direct financial support for library collections, services, and programs” topped the list of important benefits for an academic library in the survey conducted by the compilers of *Friends of College Libraries*.

The creation of an academic Friends group does have its challenges. Once cited as “the heart of an educational institution” by academic administrators, today’s academic library is more often viewed as an academic department subject to the same demands for accountability, assessment, and outcomes as those of other academic departments. The current movement toward accountability in academia and proof of outcomes and evidence-based education means that academic libraries must often prove their value. Megan Oakleaf’s *The Value of Academic Libraries* provides guidelines for library directors who want to demonstrate the value of academic libraries. If academic libraries are being asked to prove their worth, an academic Friends group can be a support group that demonstrates value.

Additional challenges cited in *Friends of College Libraries* include:

- Too much work for monetary return.
- Do not want to “compete” with other college development efforts or annual campaign.
- Lack of understanding of what a Friends group can and is doing.

All of these challenges can be dealt with if the academic library director is committed to the development of a Friends group. A commitment from the director is key to the sustainability of the friends and defining the purpose of academic Friends, whether they will be advocates, social planners, fundraisers, volunteers, or public relations representatives for the library.

Here is one testimonial about the value of academic Friends:

“We have the best Friends! The Friends of the Mott Library volunteer their time and talents to promote the library, to host fun fundraising events, and to enhance library services. The Friends’ Art Auction is one of their most successful and anticipated events, and they have also had success hosting silent auctions and Bingo games. Thanks to their hard work, Mott Library receives funds to host author visits, to purchase special collections, and to address unmet needs. Annually, our Friends provide funds to purchase popular reading materials as well as books to honor

MCC retirees. In the past, they have picked up the costs of a new detection system, a remodel of the lobby entrance area, and preservation materials for the college archives. Our Friends' love of libraries is reflected in the good works they do for our library and our students!" (Kathy Irwin, Director of Library Services, Mott Community College, Flint, Michigan)

PURPOSE OF THE FRIENDS

If Friends have great value for an academic library, what are some of the purposes a Friends group might serve? The Friends of the Kettering University Library and Archives (FOLA) work together for the following purpose:

The purpose of the Friends shall be to promote an interest in the Library and Archives among students, faculty, staff, alumni and public; to provide a fuller understanding of the role of the Library and Archives in education; to encourage gifts and bequests in support of the Library and Archives; and to assist the Kettering University Library and Archives in its educational mission through exhibits, programs, publications, and other means.

EXPECTATIONS

It's always a good idea to be clear about what you expect to gain from your academic library Friends. At Kettering University, I expect my Friends to:

- Raise money to support the Library and Archives
- Plan and support the speaker series, gaming nights, and special events for the Kettering University community and FOLA members.
- Host receptions to show appreciation for Kettering students, faculty, and staff.
- Together with library staff, organize the annual Book Sale and Silent Auction, including the member appreciation reception before the start of the book sale event.
- Recruit new members and provide names of possible FOLA Board members.
- Serve as goodwill ambassadors for the Library and Archives.

Developing an academic Friends group is all about building relationships and making connections. Expect a lot to get a lot in return.

GETTING STARTED

Whether your goal is to start an academic library Friends group or revitalize a moribund Friends group, it is important to plan accordingly. Although it sounds simple to say, so much depends on library administration and the director's role in supporting the Friends and coordinating the activities of the Friends.

At Kettering University, I laid the groundwork for developing an academic Friends group by collaborating with University Advancement (aka the Development Office) in the planning and development of the Friends of the Library and Archives (FOLA). I was fortunate to have a development officer who shared my enthusiasm for starting a Friends group, and he worked closely with me to write the bylaws, gather potential board members, and launch the organization. Some of the details of a nonprofit organization were also handled by University Advancement; for example, FOLA's 501(c)(3) status is under the umbrella of that office. University Advancement also assisted with the design for a FOLA membership brochure and for determination of membership fees. It's always a good idea to get the endorsement of the provost or university president in support of an academic Friends group.

And clearly, the academic Friends group will want to have most of the following fundamental structures to successfully manage the organization:

- a. Bylaws
- b. Board of Directors (a core group of dedicated volunteers)
- c. Membership Brochure
- d. Committees
- e. Strategic Plan (recommended)
- f. Standard Operating Procedures (optional, but very useful as the organization evolves over time)
- g. A website
- h. Newsletter

MISSION, VISION, VALUES

It is important that the academic Friends' mission be closely aligned with the institutional mission and its emphasis on teaching and learning. Here are FOLA's mission, vision, and values statements.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Friends of the Kettering University Library and Archives (FOLA) is to advocate for the library and archives as vital centers of learning at Kettering University.

Vision Statement

The Friends of the Kettering University Library and Archives (FOLA) is the key organization providing support, information, and advocacy for the Library & Archives to meet the demands of 21st century university education.

Values

In keeping with its mission FOLA adheres to the following values:

- Collaboration and networking
- Community service

- Advocacy
- Creativity

MARKETING

Positive, successful stories about academic library Friends can be found in the United for Libraries newsletter, *The Voice for America's Libraries*, which contains a “Friends on Campus” section.

The *ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education* has the following statements about performance indicators for external relations.

External Relations: Libraries engage the campus and broader community through multiple strategies in order to advocate, educate, and promote their value.

9.1 The library contributes to external relations through communications, publications, events, and donor cultivation and stewardship.

9.2 The library communicates with the campus community regularly.

9.3 Library personnel convey a consistent message about the library and engage in their role as ambassadors in order to expand user awareness of resources, services, and expertise.

From my point of view, external relations and the Friends are closely connected. We can all use “ambassadors of goodwill” who speak loudly about the value of the academic library.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Communicate, communicate, communicate. A successful Friends group must maintain a system of communication with its immediate members as well as the entire campus community.

A Friends newsletter is one important communication method, but today it is increasingly important to communicate with “customers,” however defined, through social media. It’s easy to set up a Facebook or Twitter account for your academic Friends. However, “easy” does not necessarily translate into effective use of social media. As Laura Solomon has stated in her article in *American Libraries*, “Understanding Social Capital,” one has to have a distinct audience of followers and be prepared to acknowledge comments and tweets posted on social media. Solomon maintains that social capital is “what allows any organization or individual to make requests of its followers successfully.”

It’s also possible to use e-Blasts to get out the message about your Friends, their activities and their fundraising. Jeannette Woodward in *Creating the Customer-Driven Academic Library* points out that “at the core of Library 2.0 is the belief that to prosper, libraries must partner with their customers to rethink the whole notion of the academic library.” Building partnerships, fostering collaboration: that’s what Friends are for.

10 REASONS WHY

What ultimately justifies the creation of an academic Friends group? Why are Friends important? Here are my 10 reasons why an academic library might want a Friends group.

- 1. Friends promote collaboration and cooperation.**
Friends' activities and programs offer opportunities for collaborative planning with faculty, staff, and your surrounding community and local community organizations.
- 2. Friends provide opportunities for networking. Act local, think global.**
Friends can expand networking opportunities through participation with other local Friends groups and also state and national groups. For example, United for Libraries, the Friends (trustees, advocates and foundations) division of the American Library Association, has excellent opportunities for getting involved in national library activities.
- 3. Friends can assist with marketing and promoting your library.**
Since the Friends work to support your library's services, they can adopt the library's service-oriented message as part of its message.
- 4. Friends can offer opportunities for fundraising.**
Friends have volunteers with talents and skills that can raise funds for those extra "dollops of library services" that your operating budget might not accommodate.
- 5. Friends can lift you up when you are down.**
Friends can be what the name implies: a Friend! Friends can share your concerns, help you when times are tough, provide a shoulder to cry on, and ease the burden.
- 6. Friends can help you celebrate.**
When was the last time you had a "Love Your Library" celebration in your library? Friends can assist with planning receptions, recognition events, and other celebrations. People love a reason to celebrate.
- 7. Friends can speak (sometimes loudly) in support of your library.**
Sometimes Friends speak quietly, by bringing in notable authors and writers at a Speakers Series which keeps the library as a recognized participant in the academic community.
- 8. Friends can maximize professional development and involvement.**
Friends can help support library staff attendance at conferences and workshops and give recognition to outstanding achievement through the placement of honor books in the library.
- 9. Friends can provide a sense of pride and accomplishment.**
If you want your library to be a center of activity and a showcase of exemplary learning, the Friends can sometimes assist with special programs (e.g., Gaming Night at the Library).
- 10. The Friends' mission is strongly aligned with the academic library's mission.**
The Friends volunteer their time in support of the library service mission and in support of the university's values and vision.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

When all is said and done, developing an academic Friends group requires ongoing support from library administration. The fact is, the library director/dean is the driving force behind the continuation of the Friends and the one primary factor leading to the success of the Friends. To be or not to be depends so much on energy, dedication, and enthusiasm for getting things accomplished. **You can do this!**

REFERENCES

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Appendix A

Recommended Additional Reading

Books:

- 101+ Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends* by Sally Gardner Reed, Beth Nawalinski, and Alex Peterson (available to United for Libraries members* in the Friends & Foundations Zone).
- Even More Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends* by Sally Gardner Reed and Beth Nawalinski

Toolkits (available to United for Libraries members* in the Friends & Foundations Zone):

- Tapping Into the Biggest and Most Active Volunteers in Town – The Baby Boomers!*
- Friends and Libraries Working Effectively Together*
- Incorporating and Tax Exempting Procedures for Friends of Libraries*
- Libraries Need Friends: Starting a Friends Group or Revitalizing the One You Have*

Friends on Campus Articles (more than 65 articles available to United for Libraries members* in the Friends & foundations Zone). Examples include:

- “Library Friends Groups in Community Colleges” by John B. Smith of Bronx Community College and Kyu S. Kim of Queensborough Community College#4 Starting an Academic Friends Group
- “From Dinosaur to Dynamic: Shaping an Academic Friends Organization to Meet Current Challenges” by Michele Basta of the University of Nevada, Reno
- “Friends Rally Support for American University Library” by Donald Hester, Friends of American University Library#10 Role of the Friends Board
- “Library Friends Support Preservation Efforts” by Cynthia Ashwill, Friends of the University of Illinois Library at Urbana-Champaign
- “What’s Next: Strategic Planning for Friends Groups” by Mary K. Dodge, Friends Liaison, Auraria Library, University of Denver
- “Friends on Campus: Promoting Civic Engagement through the Campus Library” by Nancy Kranich, Past President, American Library Association
- “Friends of the University of Arizona Libraries Raise over \$100,000 in Partnership with Basketball Coach” by Karen Dalziel Tallman

*See Appendix B for information about United for Libraries membership.

Appendix B

United for Libraries Member Benefits

Join today to receive the following:

FREE Newsletters!

- A subscription to *The Voice for America's Libraries*, a 24-page newsletter chock full of best practices and great ideas for Trustees, Friends, and Foundations. Features one full page of ideas for academic libraries in the **Friends on Campus** series.
- Digital access to all archived issues.

FREE Toolkits!

Access to eight in-depth toolkits (value of more than \$120), including:

- Friends and Libraries Working Effectively Together.
- How to Sell Books on the Internet.
- Tapping into the Baby Boomer Volunteers.

FREE Digital Publications!

Access to digital publications (value of more than \$150), including:

- *Making Our Voices Heard: Citizens Speak Out for Libraries.*
- *Getting Grants in Your Community.*
- *101+ Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends.*

DISCOUNTS!

- Save \$100 on the three-part webcast series “Baby Boomer Volunteers for Libraries and Friends.”
- Save \$10 on The Book Lover’s Calendar (buy in quantities of 30 for \$2.50 each, plus 5% for shipping and handling) and sell for the retail price of \$12.99 to raise money for the library.
- Save 10% on eligible purchases from the ALA Store.
- Save \$200 when designating a Literary Landmark in your community.
- Special registration opportunities to attend only United for Libraries programs at the ALA Annual Conference, a savings of more than \$200 over full conference registration.

AWARDS!

Members are eligible to apply for several United for Libraries awards, including the:

- Major Benefactor Award.
- Three \$1,000 Baker & Taylor Awards for Friends.
- Two \$250 National Friends of Libraries Week Awards.

Group memberships begin at \$50 per year; Friends groups pay \$50-\$125, depending on the number of members in the group. Current personal and organizational members of ALA may add United for Libraries divisional membership for \$50. For more information about membership, please visit <http://www.ala.org/united/membership>.

Appendix C

Sample Memorandum of Understanding Between Friends and Libraries

The following will constitute an operating agreement between the Friends of the Any University Library (Friends) and the Any University Library (Library). It will stand until and unless it is modified by mutual agreement of the Friends executive board and the Any University Library administration. The Friends mission is to raise money and public awareness in the community to support the services and programs of the Library. As a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, however, it is a legally distinct entity and is not a part of the Library.

The Library agrees to include the Friends in the long-term planning process to ensure that the Friends are aware of the goals and direction of the Library.

The Library agrees to share with the Friends the library's strategic initiatives at the beginning of each fiscal year and discuss with Friends how their resources and support might help forward these initiatives.

The Library agrees to supply the Friends with a "wishlist" each year that indicates the anticipated needs for Friends support.

The Library agrees to provide the Friends with staff support to assist them with development of the newsletter, mass mailings, meeting coordination, and Friends promotional materials.

The Library agrees to provide public space for Friends membership brochures and promotional materials.

The Library agrees to provide the Friends with space in the Library for book storage and sorting, book sales, and office needs.

The Friends agree to publicly support the Library and its policies.

The Friends agree to include a member from the library's administration as a non-voting presence at all Friends' meetings and to allow room on the agenda for a library report.

The Friends agree that any and all monies raised will be spent exclusively for library programs, services, and other Library defined needs unless otherwise agreed to by both the Friends and the Library.

The Friends agree that the library administration has the final say in accepting or declining any and all gifts made to the library.

The Friends agree to engage in advocacy efforts on behalf of the Library under the guidance of the library administration.

The Friends agree that if they cease to actively fundraise and promote the Library, they will disband, allowing for a new Friends group to be established in the future.

Appendix D

By-laws of Friends of the Kettering University Library and Archives (FOLA)

Approved June 3, 2010

Article I. Name and Address

Section 1

The name of the organization shall be “Friends of the Kettering University Library and Archives” and the organization shall be known as “*FOLA*.”

Section 2

The post office address of the principal office is: Friends of the Kettering University Library and Archives, Kettering University, 1700 University Avenue, Flint, MI 48504; or such other places as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate.

Article II. Purpose

Section 1

The purpose of the Friends shall be to promote an interest in the Library and Archives among students, faculty, staff, alumni and public; to provide a fuller understanding of the role of the Library and Archives in education; to encourage gifts and bequests in support of the Library and Archives; and to assist the Kettering University Library and Archives in its educational mission through exhibits, programs, publications, and other means.

Section 2

The monies raised by the Friends shall be donated to Kettering University to the benefit of the Kettering University Library and Archives. The Friends Board of Directors shall administer such funds.

Article III. Membership

Membership in the Friends is open to any person or organization interested in supporting the activities and programs of the Kettering University Library and Archives. Membership categories shall be set by the Board of Directors and may be modified by the Board. Memberships also may be awarded by vote of the Board, generally in consideration of services rendered or donations (monetary or non-monetary) made.

Article IV. Membership Meetings

Section 1

The annual meetings of the Friends shall be held 120 days before or after the close of the fiscal year at a time and place determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 2

Special meetings of the membership may be called by action of the Board of Directors or upon written request by 10 percent of the membership, but by not fewer than 25 members.

Section 3

The Board of Directors shall notify the members of the date, time, and place of the annual and any special meeting at least two weeks before the meeting.

Section 4

Proxies may be appointed in writing for attendance at any meeting of the membership.

Section 5

A quorum at all meetings shall be the membership present in person or by proxy.

Article V. Board of Directors.

Section 1

The Board of Directors shall consist of a minimum of ten elected members.

Section 2

Prior to the first annual meeting, the Friends shall be governed by the Steering Committee, which shall act as the Friends Board of Directors. At the first annual meeting, the membership shall elect seven to fifteen Directors. Immediately following election, those selected shall draw lots with one-third of the Directors to serve one-year terms, one-third to serve two-year terms and one-third to serve three-year terms.

The Board shall elect Directors at each subsequent annual meeting; the number of Directors to be elected and the length of the terms (three years maximum) shall be determined by the Board.

Section 3

The University Library Director, Archivist of the University Archives, and the Provost and

Vice President for Academic Affairs of Kettering University shall serve as ex-officio members of the Board of Directors.

Section 4

Nominations for Board membership shall be made by the Board of Directors and may also be made from the floor at the annual membership meeting. Nominees must indicate their willingness to serve.

Section 5

Should any duly elected member of the Board resign or be unable to complete his/her term, the vacancy created may be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors.

Section 6

The Board may remove any Director who has three or more absences from regular meetings of the Board of Directors.

Section 7

The FOLA Board may choose to appoint representatives from various constituencies to serve on the Board, with student representatives selected from both A and B sections. Such representatives will serve a one-year term, renewable at the FOLA annual meeting, and will be non-voting members of the FOLA Board.

Article VI. Duties of the Board of Directors.

Section 1

Meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at least quarterly. The Chair may elect to conduct meetings by teleconferencing. Appointed committees may also elect to conduct their meetings in this manner.

Section 2

The administrative powers of the organization shall rest with the Board of Directors, who shall have the power to perform all acts not inconsistent with these By-laws or with the policy and procedures of Kettering University.

A Volunteer Trustee (as defined in section 110 of Act 162, Public Acts of 1982, as amended) of the organization shall not be personally liable to the organization or its members for monetary damages for breach of the Trustee's fiduciary duty arising under any applicable law. However, the Article shall not eliminate or limit the liability of a Trustee for any of the following:

1. A breach of the Trustee's duty of loyalty to the organization or its members.
2. Acts or omissions not in good faith or that involves intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of the law.
3. A violation of Section 551 (1) of Act 162, Public Acts of 1982, as amended.
4. A transaction from which the Trustee derived an improper personal benefit.
5. An act or omission occurring before January, 1988.
6. An act or omission that is grossly negligent.

To the extent permitted by law, the organization assumes all liability to any person other than the organization or its members for all acts or omissions of a volunteer director (as defined in section 110 of Act 162, Public Acts of 1982, as amended) occurring on or after January 1, 1988, incurred in the good faith performance of the volunteer Trustee's duties as such.

Any repeal or modification of this Article shall not adversely affect any right or protection of any Trustee of the organization existing at the time of, or with respect to, any acts or omissions occurring before such repeal or modification.

Section 4

A quorum for any meeting of the Board of Directors shall be no fewer than one-half of the number of Directors.

Section 5

The Officers of the Board shall be Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, and they shall carry out the customary duties of those positions. They shall be elected at the first meeting of the Board of Directors following the annual meeting, and shall serve one-year terms. No officer shall serve more than three consecutive terms except by unanimous consent of the Board.

Section 6

The Chair, with Board approval, may appoint committees to handle defined subjects or projects.

Article VII. Administration

The Board of Directors may select and employ staff. The authority and duties of any such employed staff shall be spelled out in a position description which shall be reviewed no less often than annually. The Board shall review the performance of any such staff member(s) no less often than annually.

Article VIII. Fiscal year

The fiscal year of the Friends of the Kettering University Library and Archives shall run from July 1 through June 30.

Article IX. Amendments

These By-laws may be amended by a majority of members present in person or by proxy at annual or special meetings. The text of any proposed amendments must be provided to the membership at least two weeks before the meeting at which the vote is to be taken.

Article X. Dissolution

If, for any reason, the organization is dissolved, custodianship of all assets shall revert to the Kettering University Archives Endowment fund.