

The Darden Prize for Club Excellence



Executive Summary

The Darden Prize for Club Excellence is an initiative aimed at both holding student clubs accountable for results, while also recognizing and rewarding clubs that do an exceptional job in serving their members and the Darden community as a whole. By providing and coordinating an annual prize competition, the DSA hopes to enhance the spirit of innovation and continuous improvement within Darden student clubs and publicly reward excellence in student service to the university community.

All clubs are eligible to take part in the reward program, but participation is voluntary.

Club Goals

Over the summer, club presidents will submit a list of no fewer than 5 club goals for the year and a detailed description of how each of the goals will be measured. At the beginning of the school year, club leadership will meet with their respective prize committee to review the submitted goals and ensure that they are both ambitious as well as achievable. These meetings should not last longer than 30 minutes and will operate much like how sales targets are established, with club leadership and the prize committee coming to a mutual understanding of goals for the year.

Of the five goals, two must fall into broad categories established annually by the DSA, while the other three are completely open to club decision-making. For school year 2011-2012, the DSA has established three categories, from which clubs may choose two: accountability, community and diversity. Clubs are expected to have a measurable goal that applies broadly to enhancing each of these DSA tenants for the school year. The five goals for each club, once finalized, will be published by the DSA so as to provide transparency in what clubs aim to achieve in the course of the year to the Darden community.

In addition to the five goals, there will be a membership survey of club members at the end of the year to measure club member satisfaction.

After club goals are established, the committee will meet with club leadership again at the beginning of the second and third quarters for brief meetings to get updates from club leadership and provide feedback on club performance. A final meeting, at the beginning of the fourth quarter will provide clubs with an opportunity to present their year-end reports to the committee for final consideration for the prize.

Prize Committees:

Participating clubs will be considered as either an affinity club or a career club. Each category of club will have a separate prize committee, which will evaluate all clubs in the program. The committees will be composed as follows:

Career Club Committee:

- a. Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
- b. DSA President
- c. DSA Student Council Representative
- d. Faculty Representative
- e. Corporate and Foundation Relations Representative
- f. CDC Representative

Affinity Club Committee:

- a. Assistant Director of Student Affairs
- b. DSA Executive Vice President
- c. DSA Vice President for International
- d. Faculty Representative
- e. Corporate and Foundation Relations Representative
- f. CDC Representative

The Faculty, Corporate and Foundation Relations and CDC representatives will be different individuals on each committee.

In the course of the academic year, prize committees will meet quarterly with clubs to assess progress and provide feedback on performance. At the end of the year, the prize committees will be charged with subjectively assessing which club has done the most to enhance its presence in the Darden community and has achieved the most ambitious goals for their members and the Darden community at large. The assessment of clubs is a collaborative, but inherently subjective task for the committees. This subjectivity allows the committee to weight the size, scope and position of the club as necessary to evaluate which club did the most for their membership, given their situation at the beginning of the school year. All clubs will be evaluated individually against the goals they set for themselves in the fall and the ultimate satisfaction of their membership.

Tentative Prize Calendar:

September 5, 2011: 5 goals for clubs due to DSA.

September 9, 2011: Clubs meet with prize committee to talk through and finalize five goals.

November 4, 2011: Second Quarter check-in with prize committee and clubs to provide updates and feedback.

February 24, 2012: Third Quarter check-in with prize committee and clubs to provide updates and feedback.

April 6, 2012: Fourth Quarter check-in. At this meeting clubs will present their year-end reports. After this meeting prize committees will finalize their selection for the club prize for excellence.

April 16, 2012: The Darden Prize for Club Excellence winners are announced.

The Prize:

The prize will be a cash prize, awarded to the winning clubs prior to the end of the year in which they win the award. The prize may be a named award, contributed by a corporate sponsor. Without knowing the nature of the sponsor, it is hard to know if there will be any restrictions on the award. However, in soliciting funding for this award, the DSA has set as a goal that this award will be an unrestricted award that the winning club leadership may utilize at their discretion, be it as a celebration of the club's hard work, a reinvestment into the club's work or seed money for future club initiatives.