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In April 2021, the Tennessee Fund launched a new philanthropic giving society, the Shareholders Society. Mechanically, gifts to the Shareholders Society are leadership-level in nature, beginning with a minimum commitment of at least \$5,000 per year, over a five-year term. The fundamental function of the Shareholders Society is to raise the sights of all donors to Tennessee athletics. As such, we ask for this purely philanthropic support to be above and beyond the annual support and giving required for tickets, parking and other game day benefits. To thank and steward this group, we provide exclusive experiences, unique access and

other perks not available and accessible to season ticket holders and fans. Stewardship is commensurate with each individual giving level within the brands (athletics and non-athletics) around the society. For us at Tennessee, those giving levels are: \$25,000, \$50,000, \$100,000, \$250,000, \$500,000 and \$1 million+.

The philanthropic giving society concept traces its roots to the Vaught Society at Ole Miss. Similar giving societies are utilized at Georgia, Buffalo, UCF, Boise State, Utah State, Pitt, Miami and TCU. While not a new concept nationally, this concept was new to the Tennessee fanbase, season ticket holders and donors. We continue to seek out new conversations to educate our donors and market this new concept of giving. By asking our donors to raise their sights – giving outside of the traditional transactional space related directly to tickets and parking – we can grow philanthropic support specifically for capital priorities (as is the case at Tennessee), or other priorities identified by our administrative leadership.

Functionally, we aim to keep the Shareholders Society donor-centric, allowing donors to choose from a variety of funds for their philanthropic commitment. These funds can range from our unrestricted MY ALL Campaign fund, to

scholarship endowments, to individual sport excellence funds and to specific facility project funds. However, in an effort to maximize the flexibility of all of these committed funds, we are respectfully persistent in asking all donors to consider designating their gift toward the MY ALL Campaign, in an unrestricted manner. Should the donor object, we oblige and work to ensure they are excited about where their gift will ultimately be allocated. But, it is important to us that we educate each donor on the importance of flexibility for these commitments.

At Tennessee, we had a very effective first year with our Shareholders Society concept. As we launched the program, we had 123 donors/accounts that were in the middle of qualifying pledges; thus, we started our program with 123 “members.” Our team was able to grow society membership by 222 members (more than 180 percent) in year one (FY22), securing nearly \$40 million in new commitments. As we look toward FY23, we aim to add more than 200 new members, ultimately aspiring to have more than 1,000 members by FY26.



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How often do you think about your athletics department's brand in your role? It may be more important than you think.

A clear and distinctive brand is crucial when communicating with a diverse, national audience. Using your department's brand standards in a consistent manner will build and enhance credibility for your communications, enhance your brand's national recognition, and differentiate your athletics department from your peers and competitors.

But how often do you pull out your athletics department's brand standards guide? Or does such a guide even exist?

Consistency is key in branding. That doesn't mean everything has to look the same or match flawlessly. Instead, the objective should be to ensure your brand is presented consistently across all applications. In the ticketing realm that could be renewal invoices, mobile ticket designs, parking passes, thermal tickets, email campaigns, social media advertisements, webpages, and more. No matter if you're looking to convey a professional, energetic, or serious tone – a consistent brand only helps enhance your message and its credibility.

Within DePaul athletics, we've spent the past 11 months as an external team evaluating the Blue Demon brand. From that study came a handful of revisions to our brand standards. A few logos were even retired along the way. The next part was the most difficult, though. The rollout.

A strategic, scaffolded rollout was necessary to ensure we were making the necessary changes in application in an efficient and effective manner. There was no way we could change out every logo and font overnight – it wasn't operationally or financially feasible – but we

could make gradual changes to make progress towards overall consistency.

The key to that rollout was a broad understanding of the importance of our brand across our entire team. We presented our updated brand standards to each member of our external team, and then expanded our outreach to each member of our athletics department. We wanted everyone to see the changes, understand the process, and feel a sense of ownership and pride in implementing these new standards.

Today, we're continuing our rollout. The best part? Across each of our units, we're all contributing. Using your department's brand standards in a consistent manner is not just for graphic designers and marketers – we all have a role to play!