



## **Gift Acceptance Policy**

### **I. Purpose**

This Policy represents the policy of SparkPath (the “Organization”) governing the solicitation and acceptance of gifts by the Organization. The Board of Directors (“Governing Body of SparkPath”) of the Organization and its staff solicit current and deferred gifts from individuals, corporations, foundations, and others for purposes that will further and fulfill the Organization’s mission. Purposes of this Policy include:

- a) assist the organization in evaluating potential gifts in order to protect the organization from gifts that expose the organization to risks or are inconsistent with its mission;
- b) provide guidance for the Governing Body, officers, staff, and other constituencies with respect to their responsibilities concerning the acceptance of gifts to the Organization; and
- c) provide guidance to prospective contributors and their professional advisors when making gifts to SparkPath.

The provisions of this Policy shall apply to all gifts received by the Organization. SparkPath reserves the right to revise or revoke this Policy at any time, and to make exceptions to the Policy.

### **II. Scope and Application**

This policy applies to all directors, officers, and employees of SparkPath.

### **III. Policy Regarding Specific Types of Gifts**

This gift acceptance policy will address issues related to the types of gifts that will be accepted. In general, gifts accepted should further the mission, goals, and objectives of SparkPath. The policy sets forth the procedural and substantive mechanisms by which potential gifts will be evaluated.

#### **A. Criteria for Acceptance and Board Review**

Certain Criteria for Acceptance will apply to all potential gifts to SparkPath. Among those is a restriction to accept gifts only from individuals and organizations which engage in activities that affirm the Organization’s core values, mission, goals, and objectives; are appropriate to students; and maintain Organization’s positive image and identity in the community.

SparkPath Staff will evaluate every gift for acceptance according to the following criteria:

- 1) the gift may compromise core values, mission, goals, or objectives of the organization;
- 2) the gift violates the terms of the Organization’s organizational documents;
- 3) the gift could create a public relations problem;

- 4) the gift is in the form of real estate or is a “restricted” gift including gifts not easily negotiated or valued;
- 5) the gift would jeopardize the Organization’s status as an exempt organization under state or federal law;
- 6) the gift could bring harm to the organization in another way.

In the case of any controversial gift or a standard gift from a controversial source, the Board of Directors will be called upon to review a gift for acceptance. The Board of Directors will be charged with the responsibility of reviewing gifts in accordance with the policy, researching and evaluating the proposed gift in light of the Organization’s policy, and/or making recommendations with respect to such gifts.

#### **B. Restricted Gifts.**

Restricted funds require additional accounting and tracking. The Board may recommend that a gift not be accepted if there is concern about restrictions that are too difficult or expensive to administer. The Organization will not accept a gift unless the contributor is responsible for all fees associated with acceptance of the gift. Gifts restricted to one program of SparkPath are common practice, and, unless other restrictions apply, will be considered acceptable.

#### **IV. Use of Legal Counsel**

The Organization shall seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to acceptance of gifts when appropriate.

#### **V. Additional Provisions**

##### **A. Written Acknowledgement**

The Governing Body of the Organization shall provide written acknowledgement of all gifts made to the Organization and comply with the current IRS requirements in acknowledgement of the gifts. The Organization will maintain a menu of opportunities for contributors that have been so important to the quality and success of SparkPath programs since their inception.

##### **B. Contributor Recognition**

- 1) All SparkPath programs will recognize contributors with the same system for levels of monetary contributions: platinum, gold, silver, and bronze. This system will be used only for monetary contributions;
- 2) Dollar amounts per monetary levels can be program-specific and may change over time;
- 3) Special recognition may be given for contributor staying at the platinum and gold levels for consecutive years;
- 4) Specific language related to levels of monetary contributions can be program-specific. Such as: “Platinum Knowledge Club for Knowledge Bowl, etc.
- 5) Special recognition may be given for in-kind contributions. No monetary value will be assigned in publicly released materials. Such as: “Special recognition goes to Mike’s Sporting Goods for their gift of 100 t-shirts for student participants.”
- 6) Restriction: Contributors will not be named on the front of event program guides and their names will not appear as a part of a SparkPath event name or logo.

SparkPath September 2015 (New-replaces the 2009 Contributions Policy and 2004 Contribution Guidelines)