

# 2024 FoDT Capital Campaign

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the purpose of the 2024 FoDT Capital Campaign?

The 2024 FoDT Capital Campaign is a request for voluntary contributions from FoDT members in order to raise \$7,000 to cover our yearly expenses as an independent 501(c)7 organization. More specifically, this campaign aims to:

1. Cover reimbursements for the various costs of operations that individual members of FoDT took on in 2023 and early 2024;
2. Cover the additional costs of operations expected for the remainder of the 2023-2024 FoDT election year; and
3. Provide a buffer for expenses incurred in the early part of the 2024-2025 FoDT election year until we have established more consistent sources of revenue.

### What is a 501(c)7 organization and why did we become one?

A 501(c)7 is an IRS tax-exempt organization called a “social club”. In a social club, members can pool their money to acquire assets and subsidize activities for the members to use as a group, where each member may be fiscally limited in their ability to partake in the activities of the club individually. A simple example is a soccer club: renting a field, buying nets, cones, and balls, and finding storage would be too expensive for even one very passionate member to procure on their own; if instead several people pooled their money together, they could more easily kickstart their co-ed soccer program. The 501(c)7 designation gives organizations like this the ability to manage their pooled funds centrally without introducing additional federal tax burdens that would typically be leveraged against this “income”.

As written in our bylaws, FoDT was formed “*to provide networking opportunities to alumni and supporters of DramaTech Theatre ... , the student-run theater at the Georgia Institute of Technology ... . The Corporation shall further act to support and continue the mission of DramaTech.*” In the past, FoDT largely depended on a few people in the right place at the right time putting in the effort to make good things happen (much like the individual soccer player above), which often resulted in lulls in our operations and an overall lack of connection across generations of Dramatech alumni. It also limited the longevity of our members’ financial support for Dramatech. Incorporating as a 501(c)7 (i.e., lots of soccer players coming together) has given FoDT an organizational structure that can better coordinate communications with members, support programming efforts to connect our members together, and pool contributions from our members to support our mission more holistically and consistently.

### What expenses does FoDT have in a given election year?

Generally, FoDT takes on expenses in a few specific categories each year:

1. Administrative Overhead

As a registered 501(c)7 organization with the IRS, FoDT has incurred several one-time costs to incorporate our organization and establish our tax exempt status. There are also smaller recurring costs each year that we must cover to retain our 501(c) status and state incorporation. Furthermore, this category covers things like voting software to support our elections.

## 2. Communications and Technology

FoDT's operations have both monthly and annual costs associated with running things like our website, mailing list, IMDT, and other related technologies.

## 3. Recruitment

These are expenses related to events that FoDT throws specifically for Dramatech Students. These include things like Finals Week Feast and Open House. This is by far our largest category of expenses.

## 4. Programming Expenses

Programming expenses refer to expenses that go toward the FoDT member experience. This category would include expenses that go toward Alumni Weekends and Nights as well as other socials and programs that FoDT may develop as we grow as an organization. Currently our expenses here are generally zeroed out by having free events or requiring ticket sales.

## Why are we having a capital campaign to cover these expenses?

In recent years, almost all of FoDT's expenses have been paid for out of pocket by a few generous members. The current board aims to use this capital campaign to reimburse these members and ensure that the organization can continue to cover our necessary expenses in the short term while we build our long-term financial support channels.

## Why is the Capital Campaign being run through a Square site rather than the Georgia Tech Foundation link I have donated to in the past?

Friends of Dramatech, Inc. (FoDT) is a fundamentally independent and unconnected organization to the Georgia Tech Foundation (GTF). The GTF is a 501(c)3 subsidiary of the Georgia Institute of Technology. The GTF manages charitable donations given in support of academic excellence; this means their funds are earmarked for, and only for, GTF-identified "academic" benefits of the Dramatech Theatre program and its current students.

FoDT has no claim or control over these funds. While we can request reimbursement for certain Dramatech-focused events, GTF has no obligation to pay those requests out and has often refused or simply ignored them. This is not to say that we discourage donations to GTF's Dramatech fund; GTF's fund supports our ongoing scholarship payouts as well as the wonderful theater projects being taken on by the students, and we encourage you to continue to support that.

This is simply a separate endeavor in pursuit of our own dedicated mission. Developing FoDT's own internal capital will allow us to spend that money on the types of programs and events that we want to, whether within the "academic" scope or not, and to ensure their longevity across generations of Dramatech and FoDT. Moreover, it will give us the ability to bring dedicated programming to our own alumni members for the first time, supporting our mission more than ever before.

## Is my contribution to FoDT tax-deductible?

Unlike charitable donations to a 501(c)3 organization, contributions to a 501(c)7 social club are not tax deductible. That said, because FoDT is a federally tax-exempt category, your contributions will retain their full purchase power for whatever expenses they go toward.

## Am I required to contribute to remain a member? Is there a minimum contribution?

While a contribution is not required to maintain your membership status, we hope you will help us gain the financial footing we need to really grow FoDT and make it as valuable as we envision it can be for you, our other alumni, and the students that will come after us. There is no minimum contribution, so anything you can contribute helps!

## Can I contribute a different amount than the suggested options?

Yes! Just click on the choice that says "\$0.00", then enter the amount you wish to donate. Eric apologizes for the terrible User Interface.

## What is the Board's long-term vision for the value of being an FoDT member?

Shortly after FoDT held its first elections in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic gripped the world and locked us in our homes. In May of 2020, the new FoDT board asked several members to organize a series of virtual events to help connect our alumni and lend them support in such an isolating time. This was the first time FoDT had had dedicated social events outside of the Atlanta area, and while the events had their rough patches (it was collectively our first real global foray into the virtual world, after all), the response from members was overwhelmingly positive – FoDT was giving people an outlet to socialize, make new friends, and find some connection in the world.

A key part of our mission, and one that we think deserves more attention, is the first part: *"to provide networking opportunities to alumni and supporters of DramaTech Theatre"*. The board today believes that FoDT is now positioned to follow through on this critical piece of its mission and bring our members together in a way we have not seen before. In addition to supporting the same wonderful events we have always loved, we hope to expand these offerings so our members across the world can engage with each other and with theater in fun new ways. This includes things like:

1. Adding concurrent virtual and satellite events to our classic Atlanta-based offerings to bring members together in their own local spaces or across long distances in celebration of Dramatech's continued success;
2. Developing and organizing workshops for both Dramatech students and alumni to learn new theater skills and explore their creativity;
3. Organizing additional events for members around local theater-related happenings in their area to give them new ways to enjoy and participate in theater spaces; and
4. Organizing network opportunities for current Dramatech students and FoDT members alike to connect with each other and help share their talents – both theater and otherwise – with the world.

Obviously, these things will take time and effort; we hope you will join us on the journey to make it happen through this capital campaign and your continued membership in FoDT!