



ATKINSON CENTER

Cornell University

Director of Development,
David R. Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY
www.cornell.edu
<https://www.atkinson.cornell.edu/about/>

The Opportunity:



[The David R. Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future](#) seeks an innovative and strategic development leader to serve as its next Director of Development (DOD). As Cornell embarks on its next multi-billion-dollar campaign and the Atkinson Center enters a period of rapid growth, the DOD will lead the individual philanthropic efforts for the Atkinson Center and play a significant role in increasing its awareness and support.

The DOD will join a dynamic and passionate senior leadership team led by David Lodge, the Francis J. DiSalvo Director. S/He will provide strategic vision to all aspects of fundraising for the Atkinson Center and will collaborate with the Director and Associate Vice President for Alumni

Affairs and Development to develop and translate its top priorities into a comprehensive engagement and development program. The DOD will build and advance strong relationships with alumni, friends, corporations, and foundations, resulting in philanthropic contributions through collaborations with an extended alumni affairs and development partnership and the management of a portfolio of major gifts prospects.

The successful candidate will be an intellectually curious and networked fundraiser with the ability to navigate complex organizations and work in a start-up environment. An interest in and commitment to sustainability and the mission of the Atkinson Center is a must. The ideal candidate will be comfortable with ambiguity and change, open to new ideas and creative approaches to work, relish new growth opportunities, and be keen to learn. Increasing collaboration across the University to successfully build and grow the Atkinson Center's fundraising program to its greatest potential is a fundamental expectation.



Overview



Based in [Ithaca, New York](#), Cornell University is a leading privately endowed research university, and as the federal land-grant institution of New York State, [Cornell University](#) has a responsibility — unique within the Ivy League — to discover, preserve, and disseminate knowledge; produce creative work; and promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell community. Cornell values the arts and humanities as well as advanced scientific and technological research and aims to enhance the lives and livelihoods of its students, the people of New York, and others around the world.

Founded as the Cornell Center for a Sustainable Future in 2007 and then named and permanently endowed by [David R. Atkinson '60 and Patricia Atkinson](#) in 2010, the David R. Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future brings together passionate experts and innovators, theorists and practitioners, business leaders, and community members to deliver large-scale, long-term sustainability solutions. A vital University-wide commitment, the Atkinson Center empowers faculty to think outside of their departments and across disciplines when it comes to tackling the world's greatest challenge — creating a resilient future for the global community. By providing start-up funding for cross-college collaborations, emergency research, and partnerships with nonprofits, government, and industry, the Atkinson Center supports pioneering risk-takers at the very heart of radical collaboration through multiple funds and fellowship programs. Today, the Atkinson Center has more than 550 faculty fellows from across Cornell whose research encompasses critical sustainability areas such as food, energy, climate, human behavior, the built environment, and the interconnections between human, animal, and environmental health, known as [One Health](#). It benefits from the expertise and stature of Cornell's highly ranked colleges of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Veterinary Medicine, and Engineering, along with many other colleges and departments where sustainability scholarship has long been a hallmark.



The Atkinson Center's principal funds and fellowship programs to date have included:

[Academic Venture Fund](#): AVF is the Center's flagship grant program that seeds original, multidisciplinary research that is not likely to find funding elsewhere because the projects are novel, risky, need early data to establish traction, or involve new teams working together.

[Innovation for Impact Fund](#): IIF connects nonprofit, government, and industry partners with the research capacity at Cornell to jointly develop and test evidence-based solutions.

[Rapid Response Fund](#): RRF facilitates urgent or time-sensitive sustainability research, workshops, and other activities.

[Faculty Fellowship for Social Sciences, Humanities, and the Arts](#): This program is designed specifically to support the sustainability activities of faculty in the social sciences, humanities, and performing arts. Faculty-in-residence fellowships provide resources for teaching leave and small research grants for one semester, enabling faculty to focus on new or ongoing projects in the sustainability arena.



Learn more about the Atkinson Center and its accomplishments: [Atkinson Year in Review](#).

Strategic Plan:



The Atkinson Center finalized a new five-year [strategic plan](#) in June 2018 that builds upon and reinforces the Center’s successful first eight years of helping to create a vibrant and large interdisciplinary community within Cornell. The strategic plan calls for the Center to “bring Cornell’s intellectual power to the world” and envisions the Center becoming a higher impact catalyst for co-created research that leads to sustainability solutions. Bringing together Cornell University researchers with [NGOs, industry, government agencies, and peer academic institutions](#), the Center’s future work is focused on “Building Resilient Rural-Urban Systems;” these include the food, water, energy, and economic systems that connect the lives of rural and urban dwellers, as informed by the U.N. 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Center is currently building complementary “[Knowledge to Action](#)” working groups to encourage transdisciplinary research and practice and increase impact outside of academia. This system focus will take advantage of Cornell’s signature strengths in agriculture, engineering, veterinary science, and its singular position as the nation’s only land-grant Ivy League institution.

The Role

The David R. Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future, Cornell University’s interdisciplinary community in sustainability, seeks a Director of Development (DOD). The Development Director has dual reporting lines

to the Center's Director and the Associate Vice President for College & Unit's in Cornell's Division of Alumni Affairs & Development (AAD).

In concert with the Atkinson Center leadership and AAD, the Development Director will serve as chief development officer for, and manager of, the Center's alumni affairs and development program, with responsibility for securing private philanthropic support. S/He will lead the strategic management of a comprehensive development program which executes on the unit's and university's strategic philanthropic priorities. The DOD will build and advance strong relationships with alumni and friends that result in philanthropic contributions to the Atkinson Center by leading the college's major gifts, leadership gifts, annual fund, and any other special projects related specifically to the development function of the Center. The DOD independently manages a portfolio of individual prospects, while also serving as point person/liaison with partners across AAD and the university. The Director devises strategies for engagement in alignment with unit priorities, fundraising, and otherwise.

The Director is responsible for managing relationships with individual giving officers outside of the Atkinson Center AAD office to assist with prospect strategies that further enhance awareness and support of the Center among major gift prospects. The Director is frequently in contact with individuals outside of the University as well as with members of the Center's faculty and staff, and members of the Division of Alumni Affairs and Development.

The DOD will be the primary thought partner on development for the Center's Director, David Lodge and serve as a member of his senior leadership team. S/He will collaborate with the Director and Associate VP for Alumni Affairs and Development to develop and translate the top priorities of the Center into a comprehensive alumni affairs and development program. In addition, S/He will coordinate initiatives with University individual giving officers and other AAD colleagues and serve as a major gifts officer for 25-50 prospective donors with the capacity to give \$250,000 or more. The director is responsible for planning and implementing an integrated approach to development and alumni-relations programs that maximizes support for the Center.

Required Qualifications:

The candidate must have a bachelor's degree and a minimum of five to seven years of experience in development, individual fund raising, or closely related experience; excellent communications skills, both written and verbal; effective organizational skills and strong detail orientation; superb listening skills with a relationship-oriented approach; and intellectual curiosity, capacity and versatility to understand and promote the latest scientific research and thought leadership in sustainability across multiple disciplines.

The candidate must also have the ability to work effectively in a fast-paced, complex environment, while handling multiple tasks and competing priorities at the same time; ability to work independently while supporting the efforts of an overall team; ability to work effectively and collaborate with a large, diverse staff network; ability to learn and effectively apply knowledge of University and College priorities and programs within a fund raising effort; sound judgment, tact and discretion in handling highly confidential and sensitive information; the ability to develop innovative and creative options to increase potential prospect base; and the ability to develop effective strategies to meet stated goals.

Candidate must be willing to work occasional weekends, evenings, and to undertake business travel. The preferred candidate will have experience in higher education or similarly complex environments using the concepts and principles of nurturing fund raising, campaign/project fund raising and speculative fund raising. Must have strong computer skills with proficiency in Microsoft desktop applications, including Word Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Adobe Acrobat.

Preferred Qualifications:

Preference also for a seasoned fundraising professional with experience working in higher education; particularly experience working in a large, complex institution or university with professional schools. Experience working in a nurturing fundraising with high level individuals and complex solicitations to advance relationships which will lead to their investment in priority areas is preferred.

Leadership



David M. Lodge

The Francis J. DiSalvo Director

Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future

David M. Lodge, the Francis J. DiSalvo Director of the Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future, is an internationally recognized conservation biologist, former President of the Ecological Society of America, and the Founder and former Director of the University of Notre Dame Environmental Change Initiative.

One of the world's leading experts on aquatic invasive species, Lodge has extensive research experience in freshwater ecology, invasive species biology and bioeconomics, ecological risk analysis, global changes and biodiversity, and environmental ethics and policy.

Lodge has a long history of collaborating with economists, historians, theologians, and philosophers and has partnered with organizations to bring his scientific work to the public policy arena. He has testified before Congress on numerous occasions, served on national and international policy boards, and recently completed a year as a senior science adviser to the U.S. Department of State. In 2013, he was appointed to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Science Advisory Board. He has published 230 scientific papers and edited two books.

Lodge's appointment began in May 2016. He serves as the first Francis J. DiSalvo Director of the Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future, thanks to a recent gift from David '60 and Patricia Atkinson in honor of the Center's founding director.

Lodge's past research in rural Kenya and Zambia identified ways to improve human livelihoods and health, while also providing energy and minimizing environmental impact. While at Notre Dame, Lodge founded two centers and coordinated externally funded research projects totaling \$13 million in the last decade. He led a formal partnership with The Nature Conservancy and annually convened representatives from 30 state, provincial, and federal agencies from the United States and Canada to enhance the relevance of university research and hasten its application in natural resource management.

Lodge's academic home at Cornell is in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. He has a joint appointment with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the College of Arts and Sciences.



Kristen Ford
Associate Vice President for Colleges and Units

Kristen Ford was named Associate Vice President in 2016, a role that follows 11 years in Cornell's Division of Alumni Affairs and Development, where she also served as the Assistant Vice President for University Corporate and Foundation Relations, Director of New Business Development, and Senior Campaign Officer for Special Initiatives. With 30 years of experience in higher education, Ford has also held leadership positions at Ithaca College and earned a Bachelor's degree and Master's degree from the University of Rhode Island.

Division of Alumni Affairs and Development Overview

The Division of Alumni Affairs and Development (AAD), led by [Fred Van Sickle](#), encompasses a staff of 350 and operates with a budget of \$55 million.

With an extraordinarily loyal alumni base and deeply committed volunteers, Cornell is considered one of the nation's top performing fundraising operations, historically ranked in the top five to 10 annually. In fiscal year 2019, Cornell raised \$550 million in new gifts and commitments.



Cornell Now — *The Campaign for Cornell*, which began in 2004, concluded in December 2015 raising \$6.36 billion. *The Campaign for Cornell* was driven by several large transformational gifts. Overall, 176,637 individual donors and 8,496 corporations and foundations contributed to the University's Ithaca campus, [Cornell Tech](#), and [Weill Cornell Medicine](#). They added \$2.4 billion to Cornell's endowments and \$3.9 billion for current use and facilities. Of those, 685 were gifts over \$1 million, including 28 gifts over \$50 million.

Cornell is currently in the planning phase of a University-wide campaign to achieve further success in service to society. At this early stage, it is expected that the campaign will span fiscal years 2019 - 2025. This preparatory stage, anticipated for a 2020 public launch, is essential to the campaign's success.

Background Checks:

Prior to submitting your resume for this position, please read it over for accuracy. Lindauer does verify academic credentials for its candidates, and our clients frequently conduct background checks prior to finalizing an offer.

**To learn more, call 617-262-1102
or send nominations or cover letter and resume to
Jill Lasman, Executive Vice President at
jlasman@LindauerGlobal.com
or
Donna Russell, Consultant at
drussell@LindauerGlobal.com**

All inquiries will be held in confidence.

Diversity and inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. It is a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.



Setting the Standard in Nonprofit Talent

LINDAUER
420 Boylston Street, Suite 604, Boston, MA 02116
617-262-1102
www.LindauerGlobal.com