



MERRIMACK COLLEGE

Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations
Merrimack College
North Andover, MA
<https://www.merrimack.edu/>

Send Nominations or Cover Letter and Resume to:
Lisa Abair Vuona
Vice President
617-262-1102
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The Opportunity:

In a time of declining enrollments, budget cuts, and limited investments in people and programs, Merrimack College is a thriving institution helping students to become the leaders of tomorrow by giving them the skills and capacities needed to solve the complex social, technological, and economic challenges of the 21st century. As Merrimack has just completed a fabulously successful campaign, the new Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations will have a unique opportunity to reframe and launch the next wave of institutional giving that will support the college's efforts to continue to provide the best academic and personal experience for its students. Over the next several years, Merrimack plans to go beyond its original enrollment goals for undergraduate and graduate education, launch an innovative fundraising campaign, and build and renovate campus facilities and academic spaces. Donors are making a big — and palpable — difference on the Merrimack College campus. <https://www.merrimack.edu/agenda-for-distinction/transforming-our-campus/>





In 2011, the college embarked on a community-wide strategic process that led to the creation of the Agenda for Distinction, a strategic plan that outlined five distinct goals for advancing Merrimack to become a top-50 school in *U.S. News*' regional universities in the North and one of the 10 "Most Transformative" institutions in the country, according to *Money Magazine*. Using this strategic vision, the college has experienced record applications and enrollments at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, significant growth in faculty ranks, the success of a major capital campaign, and

investment in the college's first new residence halls, academic buildings, and athletics facilities in decades.

<https://www.merrimack.edu/agenda-for-distinction/>

Now in its 10th year under the leadership of President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., the college has launched another strategic process: the Agenda for the Future. The Agenda for the Future will shape the trajectory of the college over the next five years positioning Merrimack to become a top 30 regional institution by 2025.

The incoming Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations (VP) has the unique opportunity to join a highly innovative and entrepreneurial senior team that will inspire the next wave of growth in order to achieve Merrimack's ambitious goals. The Vice President will strategically engage and partner with Merrimack College's President, Board of Trustees, faculty, volunteers, alumni, colleagues, and staff to identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward individuals, foundations, and corporations. The VP will be the architect behind the strategic growth of a comprehensive development and alumni effort resulting in increased awareness, fund development, and support of Merrimack College.

Overview

Merrimack College was founded in 1947 in North Andover, MA, by the Order of St. Augustine. The Augustinians, at the invitation of Richard Cardinal Cushing, then archbishop of Boston, established the College as a direct response to the needs and aspirations of local G.I.'s returning from World War II. Since that time, the College has graduated nearly 25,000 students and constructed more than 40 buildings, including the Rogers Center for the Arts, Duane Stadium, Crowe Hall for the Girard School of Business, the Arcidi Center for Admissions & Corporate Engagement and a 125,000-volume state of the art library & student success center. Over 3600 undergraduates and 700 graduate students from across the United States and across the globe travel to attend Merrimack College.





Today, Merrimack College is one of the fastest-growing educational institutions in the country and is recognized across the country for its excellence and value. A selective, private college in a beautiful, residential setting, the College features more than 100 career-focused [undergraduate](#), [professional](#), and [graduate programs](#), all taught by exceptional faculty who are passionate about their subject and student success.

Merrimack prepares students with the skills and knowledge today's employers want. Whether it be in business, health sciences, education, science, technology, or liberal arts, a Merrimack education offers a tailored experience that aligns with student's personal and professional goals, enriched by its Catholic Augustinian heritage. With a 14:1 student-faculty ratio, classes are small but deliver big ideas.

Ninety-nine percent of students receive a grant and/or scholarship and the cost of Merrimack comes close to that of a state institution. Based on alumni career statistics, Merrimack is on the right track, with a 96% career outcomes rate and salaries that are 60% higher than the national average 10 years post-graduation.

Development Overview

The \$50 million [Together for Good: The Campaign for Merrimack College](#) exceeded its goal, completing the campaign in May 2019 at \$62 million. The Campaign was designed to continue to build a philanthropic foundation and fund critical projects and programs that will make a lasting impact on future generations of Merrimack scholars. Strategic investments in infrastructure, academic programs, support services, athletics, student experiences, and scholarships will pay dividends for decades to come — both for the students, who will go on to become ethical leaders, and for society as a whole.

The Office of Development and Alumni Relations is a close-knit team of 20 professionals in annual giving, major gifts, planned giving, corporate and foundation relations, and alumni relations. Together the team raises \$11–13 million annually. The Development Team is poised for its next iterative initiatives in institutional giving



Leadership



Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D.
President

President Christopher E. Hopey, Ph.D., has presided over an era of unprecedented success at Merrimack College, marked by record applications and enrollments at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, significant growth in faculty ranks, the ongoing success of a major capital campaign, and investment in the college's first new residence halls, academic buildings, and athletics facilities in decades.

Early in his presidency, Dr. Hopey engaged the college community in a collaborative strategic planning process to help Merrimack develop a clear vision for the future. The outcome has been Merrimack's strategic plan, the Agenda for Distinction, which set five overarching goals for advancing Merrimack to prominence and has focused the College's planning and priorities.

Before leading Merrimack, Dr. Hopey was vice president and dean of the College of Professional Studies at Northeastern University. Previously, he was vice dean at the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

He served as president/chair of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Massachusetts and has been elected to the board of directors of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

Dr. Hopey is the author of numerous journal articles and a frequent speaker at national conferences. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Northeastern University.

The Role – Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations

Summary of Position:

To succeed in this position requires talent and thought as well as an entrepreneurial mindset. Ready for a creative, entrepreneurial, and strategic stewardship of Development? Providing strategic and operational leadership for the Development function, the individual reports directly to and works in partnership with the President and participates as a member of the President's senior team. The VP will manage the day-to-day operations of a growing fundraising team of approximately 20; mobilize and stimulate a talented staff in engaging an extraordinarily loyal community of Merrimack alumni, parents, and friends; and achieve

ambitious growth in charitable giving. The VP of Development will be responsible for strategy and operationalizing new areas of focus for giving.

The VP serves as the College's chief alumni relations officer, chief development officer, comprehensive campaign director, and confidant to the President. The ideal candidate will be entrepreneurial, a dynamic leader, and a solid supporter of the College's mission, vision, and values.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Set a clear, strategic course for the Office of Development. Establish priorities for development and alumni relations, ensuring that managers are focused on those strategies and tactics that are essential to each department's performance against clearly articulated goals;
 - Build a robust pipeline of mid- to major-level gifts that will sustain the College's fundraising success in the long term. Track progress against goals and redirect staffing and prospect assignments as necessary to maximize potential giving opportunities.
 - Cultivate, solicit, and steward a portfolio of high-level alumni and friends.
 - Create best practices for the cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of donors.
 - Implement a clear and concise alumni relations plan, incorporating creative, new ways to engage alumni and volunteers.
- Establish and execute strategies that result in continuously rising standards and expectations in fundraising goals to have an impact annual philanthropic support;
- Partner with the President, senior leadership, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and other Trustees, high-level volunteers, and staff to lead and execute the Development strategy. Foster strong, personal relationships with the College Leadership Council and other members of Merrimack Board of Trustees;
- Provide comprehensive, timely, and innovative stewardship to alumni and friends;
- Motivate, mentor, and lead a team of 20 development and alumni relations professionals. Establish clear and attainable goals and expectations, schedule regular one-to-one meetings with individual managers, facilitate and lead team-based Development meetings, communicate regularly with the team outside of scheduled meetings, and complete timely performance evaluations as required;
- In partnership with the President, lead the development of a comprehensive campaign plan in support of the College's priorities, including identifying needed financial and personnel resources and time commitments from campus leaders and volunteers;
 - Engage and manage the campaign work of campus and volunteer leaders and oversee engagement and management of the campaign efforts of alumni volunteers, department heads, directors, and members of the faculty and staff. Develop and manage campaign budget.
- Promote Development best practices, including reviewing and revising or creating policies and procedures for the College;
- Actively use data to assess the effectiveness of the College's fundraising programs and to guide the College's fundraising strategies. Monitor consistent wealth screenings and data from Millenium for effective tools with donors and friends;

- Be an active and collaborative partner across campus, building solid relationships with the Provost, EVPs, faculty, enrollment management, and other staff; and
- Be a strong, strategic partner with the President for all matters relating to alumni, parents, donors, and friends.

Key Qualifications:

- The intellectual depth, maturity, and collaborative skills to garner the trust and confidence of the President, trustees, faculty and staff, senior management, volunteers, staff, and other constituents;
- Abilities required:
 - A proven track record of successful solicitations from a variety of constituencies, including the design and execution of identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship strategies.
 - Proven experience as a leader, as well as coach and counselor, of other major gift professionals who can enable them to increase their success in cultivating and soliciting highly rated donors.
 - Proven ability to link strategies of the organization with Development activities.
 - Successful track record of demonstrating how to articulate the unique and focused mission and aspirations of the College.
 - Demonstrated success in increasing the effectiveness of a fundraising unit through established objectives and managing a high-performance team.
 - Proven experience in principal, major, and foundation gifts cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship, and managing a personal portfolio of principal and major gift donors/prospects.
 - Strong communication and organizational skills and attention to planning, with high expectations for Development;
- Dynamic, team-oriented leadership in a fast-paced environment;
- Demonstrated motivational and problem-solving capabilities with a high degree of integrity, ethics, and dedication to the mission of Merrimack College;
- Thought leadership for developing a compelling institutional giving message;
- Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree preferred;
- Proven experience as a leader, as well as coach and counselor, of other major gift professionals who can enable them to increase their success in cultivating and soliciting highly rated donors;
- Proven ability to build a program with an entrepreneurial and goal-oriented attitude; and
- Minimum experience required:
 - Minimum eight years of progressively responsible experience in the design, implementation, execution, and growth of a comprehensive fundraising program within a complex organization.
 - Demonstrated managerial experience and a proven ability to design and implement effective philanthropy strategies and processes.
 - Experience with developing and leading a full fundraising program including: annual giving, major and principal giving, corporate and foundation relations, and planned giving.

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
Lisa Abair Vuona, Vice President at
617-262-1102
or send nominations or cover letter and resume to
lvuona@lindauerglobal.com.**

All inquiries will be held in confidence.



Setting the Standard in Nonprofit Talent
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