

# Simmons UNIVERSITY

Vice President for Advancement and Chief Development Officer

Simmons University

Boston, Massachusetts

<https://www.simmons.edu/>



## The Opportunity:

Simmons University seeks an experienced, innovative, and strategic Vice President and Chief Development Officer for Advancement (VPCDO) with the highest standards of achievement, integrity, and excellence. Reporting to the President and serving as a member of the President's Leadership Team, the VPCDO will have a demonstrated commitment to the value of higher education and the opportunities it provides; a proven track record of success in building comprehensive advancement programs through engagement with key stakeholders, collaboration with the internal and external community members, and bold thinking that inspires constituents; and an unwavering focus on creating programs, engagement opportunities, and strategic funding priorities that inspire alumnae/i, parents, friends, and community members to invest in the future of the University.

With the opportunity to lead and expand the current Advancement team, the VPCDO will oversee and direct Simmons' next campaign, which celebrates its 125th anniversary. As the University moves forward with construction of a new Science Center, they are also consolidating their two campuses into one with a Living and Learning Center that will house all of their residential beds, athletic & fitness center, and dining facilities in one building – the VPCDO will lead the efforts to engage donors and prospects in this bold vision for the institution. Simmons has been a trailblazer and an innovator over the last decade, devoting considerable institutional capital to building high-quality online academic offerings at the [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) levels, redesigning its institutional structure to meet the demands of 21<sup>st</sup>-century education and research, and launching the “[One Simmons](#)” initiative to enhance its strategic financial and competitive positions for years to come. The VPCDO will lead the effort to bring the institution to its full philanthropic potential by building a best-in-class Advancement team that will identify, engage, and inspire donors at all levels. They will oversee all aspects of a robust and substantive advancement effort including all fundraising, advancement services, and alumnae/i and donor relations. They will motivate and lead the team in the boldest campaign in the history of the University with fearlessness and the conviction that the world is a better place with Simmons University providing world-class education and learning opportunities for students from around the globe.

Simmons seeks a seasoned advancement leader with a significant track record of personal and successful involvement in individual, major, and principal giving, and demonstrated success in a campaign environment. Given Simmons is a leader in online graduate education programs, the VPCDO will also need to be able to envision and build leading-edge advancement programs that engage and garner support from both Boston-based and virtual learners across its programs. They must be a strong motivator, have excellent leadership skills, and possess a commitment to education and social justice through the lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. This individual will have experience setting and achieving ambitious goals and fostering innovation through strong strategic planning, collaboration, creativity, and execution.

## About Simmons University

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Located in the heart of Boston, Simmons University is a private university, home to a respected women's undergraduate program as well as coeducational graduate programs in nursing and health sciences, liberal arts, business, communications, social work, public health, and library and information science. Simmons has established a model of higher education that only today other colleges and universities are beginning to adapt: the combination of education for leadership in high-demand professional fields with the intellectual foundation of the liberal arts. The result is a

Simmons graduate prepared not only to work but to lead in professional, civic, and personal life — [a vision of empowerment](#) that Simmons calls preparation for life's work.

The Simmons story is one of growth, innovation, and a solid foundation — fueled by on-the-ground and online enrollment and investments in its campus and technology. For more than a century, Simmons has been preparing women to lead lives that impact communities around the globe. Along the way it has embraced visionary thinking, innovation, and change, adapting to shifts in higher education while remaining true to its mission. In alignment with its core purpose, Simmons launched one of the first undergraduate women's studies degree programs for women in the 1960s. Soon after, Simmons created the first M.B.A. program designed specifically for women, with a focus on the organizational behavior of men and women. As new technologies and increased competition have caused significant disruptions in the higher education landscape, Simmons has developed and expanded high-quality, nationally recognized online graduate degree and certificate programs in such areas as nursing, social work, and library and information science.

Simmons' partnership with education technology company [2U](#) has been instrumental to the growth of the University's nationally recognized graduate programs, including the doubling of enrollment and revenue since 2012. In May 2020, Simmons expanded this productive partnership to develop and deliver a fully online, reimagined virtual experience with hundreds of online undergraduate courses to meet the needs of students during the pandemic.

In founding and endowing Simmons College in his 1899 will, Boston businessman John Simmons acted on a revolutionary idea: Women should be educated like men and prepared to earn independent livelihoods for themselves and their families. Over its long history, Simmons has evolved and changed, but it has remained true to its commitment to empower women through a strong educational foundation. Combining intellectual achievement with purpose to make an impact in the world was and continues to be the broad goal of Simmons.

## Leadership

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Lynn Perry Wooten, a seasoned academic and an expert on organizational development and transformation, became the ninth president of Simmons University on July 1, 2020. She is the first African American to lead the university.

Specializing in crisis leadership, diversity and inclusion, and positive leadership — organizational behavior that reveals and nurtures the highest level of human potential — Dr. Wooten is an innovative leader and prolific author and presenter whose research has informed her work in the classroom and as an administrator. She first joined a university faculty in 1994 and has served in administrative roles since 2008. Dr. Wooten came to Simmons from Cornell University, where she was the David J. Nolan Dean and Professor of Management and Organizations at the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management.

Dr. Wooten also has had a robust clinical practice, providing leadership development, education, and training for a wide variety of companies and institutions, from the Kellogg Foundation to Harvard University's Kennedy School to Google.

With leadership at the core of her work, Dr. Wooten's research has ranged from an NIH-funded investigation of how leadership can positively alleviate health disparities to leading in a crisis and managing workforce diversity. She is the author of two books, *Positive Organizing in a Global Society: Understanding and Engaging Differences for Capacity Building and Inclusion* (2016) and *Leading Under Pressure: From Surviving to Thriving Before, During, and After a Crisis* (2010). Sharing her work at nearly 60 symposia and conferences, she also is the author of nearly 30 journal articles and more than 15 book chapters, as well as managerial monographs and numerous teaching cases.

Dr. Wooten grew up in Philadelphia, where she attended an all-girls high school. She earned a B.S. in accounting in 1988 from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, a Historically Black College, where she graduated as valedictorian; an MBA from the Duke University Fuqua School of Business in 1990; and a PhD in business administration from the University of Michigan Ross School of Business in 1995. She received a Certificate in Advanced Educational Leadership from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education in 2018.

Starting her career as assistant professor of management at the University of Florida Warrington College of Business, Dr. Wooten returned in 1998 to the University of Michigan, where she served on the faculty of the Ross School of Business for nearly 20 years. There she taught undergraduate, graduate, and executive education courses and served as Co-Faculty Director of the Center for Positive Organizations as well as Co-Faculty Director of the Executive Leadership Institute. She became engaged in student life as an associate dean, ultimately serving as Senior Associate Dean for Student and Academic Excellence. She left Michigan in 2017 for the deanship at Cornell.

Dr. Wooten is an active member of several national volunteer leadership organizations, including Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Jack & Jill of America, Junior League, and The Links Inc. She is an advisory board member for the Aspen Institute's Business and Society Program and on the boards of the Center for Effective Philanthropy and the University of Michigan Alumni Association.

She is a past recipient of the University of Michigan Ross School of Business's BBA Student Award for Teaching Excellence as well as the school's Andy Andrews Distinguished Service Award. She also was chosen as a "Next Generation Business Thinker" by the *Financial Times*.

Dr. Wooten is married to David Wooten, a chaired marketing professor at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business, and they have two children, Justin and Jada.

The Simmons University Board of [Trustees](#) is a strong and experienced board with representation from the undergraduate and graduate programs and schools and beyond. It is a diverse collection of industry and community leaders with a common passion for the mission of Simmons. These leaders are highly engaged with the life of the institution and are fully supportive of Dr. Wooten's dynamic and bold vision for the future.

## Development/Advancement Overview

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Simmons completed the *Making Education Work* campaign in 2015, raising more than \$100 million and fueling a transformation of the physical campus and major programs. Since the campaign's successful conclusion, the Advancement team has continued with strong fundraising and engagement efforts and activities.

Under the visionary leadership of Dr. Wooten new opportunities for support abound, and the next campaign, led by the VPCDO, will harness the potential and possibilities that are core to the institution. Looking to the future, Simmons'

leadership has embarked on a series of far-reaching initiatives that aim to reshape the University and position it for the long term. Preliminary campaign conversations are underway with University leadership, trustees, and key donors. Current staff are working to increase alumnae/i affinity for online programs and degrees powered by forward-thinking faculty, enhance awareness of the work of the [Simmons Institute for Inclusive Leadership](#), and inspire prospects and donors to see the transformative future of Simmons. This work, combined with the institution's steadfast dedication to empowering women, developing leaders, and advancing equity and justice both locally and globally provide the VPCDO with the key components upon which to build and lead a best-in-class Advancement division.



Dr. Wooten's nine Strategic Priorities are the building blocks for key stakeholders throughout the University. Key funding opportunities for the campaign will include capital improvements around the "One Simmons" concept, empowering faculty excellence, creating a pivotal student experience, and demonstrating a leadership brand promise.

In FY20, the Advancement team raised more than \$9 million in total with nearly \$2.4 million in annual gifts and over \$5 million in major and principal gifts. Historically, the University has a strong planned-giving program that provides support of the endowment through realized bequests. Current endowment value is approximately \$190 million. The team drives all fundraising strategy, planning, and operations for undergraduate alumnae and graduate school alumni as well as alumnae/i relations and donor relations. Continually evaluating and assessing their programs, the Advancement team offers a robust menu of opportunities for alumnae/i across disciplines and schools to participate. Their focus on and engagement with this cohort is a new market for the University. The team has seen particular success with higher levels of online engagement and event attendance and seeks to build on this as it prepares for the upcoming campaign to recognize Simmons' 125th anniversary and celebrate the in-person academics and online programs for which Simmons is known around the world.

Current staff strive to create a culture of inclusive philanthropy through engagement events, volunteer experiences, multichannel fundraising, direct solicitations, and individualized stewardship. With a focus on

two main goals — *to encourage consistent annual giving to support the operating budget and to inspire and secure transformative gifts for specific university priorities* — the team continually seeks ways to develop relationships with the internal and external community that will demonstrate Simmons' commitment to empowering students to have a life of purpose. The division is currently structured with four operating units: **Capital Giving**, focusing on outright and planned gifts of six figures or more from individuals, foundations, and corporations; **Annual Giving**, focusing on annual gifts from undergraduate alumnae, graduate school alumni, parents, and friends; **Alumnae/i Engagement**, focusing on creative, meaningful, and substantive engagement opportunities for alumnae/i, friends, and community members; and **Advancement Operations**, encompassing stewardship, prospect development, database management, gift recording, and acknowledgements.

## The Vice President and Chief Development Officer for Advancement Role

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Dr. Lynn Wooten, who became the ninth President of Simmons University in July 2020, seeks a Vice President and Chief Development Officer for Advancement to join the senior leadership team's collaborative and strategic efforts to advance the University's mission, vision, and goals.

Reporting to the President, the VPCDO will also work closely with the Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Chief Marketing Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, the Provost, the Senior Vice President and General Counsel, the Vice President for Real Estate Development and Facilities Management, the Chief People Officer, the Vice President for Enrollment Management, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the deans of the four colleges, the CEO of the Institute for Inclusive Leadership, the President's Advisory Council on Diversity, and the Office of Organizational Culture, Inclusion, and Equity. [Click here](#) for more information on Dr. Wooten and the senior leadership team.

### Key Responsibilities:

The Vice President and Chief Development Officer for Advancement has among their principal responsibilities the following:

- Serving as the College's highest-level advancement officer and chief advisor to the President, the trustees, and other University officials on all matters involving current or potential philanthropic support;
- Designing, planning, and directing the day-to-day operations of the anticipated comprehensive campaign, as well as other major gift initiatives;
- Hiring, training, supporting, and leading the Advancement department teams;
- Developing and providing leadership — in close collaboration with the President, trustees, and other volunteer leaders, members of the President's Advisory Council, and other University staff — for programs that will lead to the philanthropic support for priority needs of the University, including operations, endowment, facilities, and support of continuing programs;
- Representing the University as appropriate to internal and external constituencies;
- Serving as primary staff liaison to the Simmons University Board of Trustees Advancement Committee, as well as working closely with virtually all members of the Board;
- Being an active member of the President's Advisory Council; and

- Undertaking such other duties as the President may assign.

## **Educational/Experience Requirements:**

The Vice President and Chief Development Officer for Advancement will be an experienced advancement professional with a track record of leadership and success in fundraising and a minimum of 10 years experience. They will bring significant experience at a leadership level with campaign efforts, alumnae/i relations, and all aspects of a comprehensive giving program (annual, major, planned, capital, transformational, corporate, and foundation). A Bachelor's degree is required, and an advanced degree is preferred. A track record of progressively responsible management experience with responsibility for people, programs, and budgets is required.

### **Additional requirements include:**

- Ten-plus years of success in nonprofit arena with increasing levels of responsibility in areas of leadership, fundraising, strategic planning, and communications; leadership experience within an institution of higher education is strongly preferred.
- Direct and relevant leadership experience planning, launching and executing a multi-million-dollar comprehensive campaign while engaging key members of the community.
- Demonstrated experience building, organizing, and leading a successful and innovative advancement program supported by a diverse team of talented professionals.
- Proven success in cultivating, soliciting, and closing major and transformative gifts.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in work with volunteer leaders of all levels.
- A forward thinker who inspires and encourages creativity, collaboration, and excellence; has a proven track record of developing innovative programs that have led to positive outcomes.
- Superior organizational and communication skills.
- A strong sense of operational efficiency combined with the ability to utilize data to make bold and informed decisions.
- Ability to plan, monitor, and manage a comprehensive budget.
- A commitment to diversity and inclusion and a professional history of advancing progress in these areas.

## Position

## Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

## Requirements:

- Excellent communication and presentation skills, including the ability to write and speak effectively and with authenticity. Must be a strong listener with a communication style that is open, approachable, and collaborative.
- Ability to develop trust and strong working relationships throughout the internal and external constituencies.
- A high level of emotional intelligence, self-confidence, energy, sense of humor, collaborative spirit, and the ability to contribute meaningfully to a high-functioning leadership group.
- Authenticity, integrity, respect for others, resourcefulness, diplomacy, and a strong work ethic are essential and must be supported by a commitment to follow-through and willingness to assess and take calculated risks.
- Deep knowledge of and commitment to best practices across higher education.
- Demonstrated track record of working and interacting productively with diverse people and groups.
- The ability and willingness to travel as needed.



*Consistent with the University's goals to achieve diversity at all levels of University leadership, Simmons encourages nominations and applications from individuals in traditionally underrepresented groups and those dedicated to building a culture of inclusive excellence at Simmons. The University is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, ancestry, class, color, disability, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other status protected by law.*

## A Thriving University in a Global City

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The [Simmons campus](#) is in the Fenway neighborhood, within walking distance of the Longwood Medical Area, where many Simmons students complete internships and clinical rotations at hospitals and medical research facilities.

Simmons is also a short ride to Cambridge's Kendall Square, a locus of technology innovation and successful startups, as well as the burgeoning Seaport and Financial Districts, where law, venture capital, and investment firms offer opportunities to students with interests in those fields.

The University is also linked with several nearby historical and cultural institutions. The Boston Public Library, Massachusetts Historical Society, and John F. Kennedy Library offer unmatched opportunities for research and professional experience for undergraduate and graduate students alike, while institutions such

as the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Museum of Fine Arts host internships for Simmons students, providing rich material for experiential learning.

As with Simmons, Boston has grown considerably in the past few decades. Though it once might have been viewed as a small, even provincial city, Boston now is a booming and global metropolis, with almost five million people in the metro area. With that growth has come a welcomed diversity in racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, and national origin. And, as home to more than a quarter-million college students, Boston is a center of higher education and a community of educators, administrators, and student service professionals unlike anywhere else in the world.

## 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.

## Procedure for Candidacy

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Nominations, applications, and inquiries are being accepted for the position. Consideration of candidates will continue until the position is filled. Candidates should submit, in confidence, a resume and cover letter. Communications, nominations, applications, and inquiries concerning this search should be directed to:

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**All inquiries will be held in confidence.**



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