



Associate Vice President for Colleges and Units
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY
cornell.edu

Send Nominations or Cover Letter and Résumé to:

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The Opportunity

Cornell University, a nationally ranked Ivy League institution, is seeking a strategic, forward-thinking, and solutions-oriented advancement leader to serve as the Associate Vice President of Colleges and Units. This is an outstanding opportunity for a seasoned manager and successful advancement professional to lead a high-performing team within one of the nation's top advancement operations.

Reporting to the Senior Associate Vice President of Alumni Affairs and Development (AAD) and serving as a member of the leadership team, the Associate Vice President for Colleges and Units (AVP) leads a team of more than 35 staff, comprising nine direct reports, which include the Assistant/Associate Deans and Directors of Alumni Affairs and Development in eight colleges and units and University Foundation Relations and Corporate Philanthropy. In partnership with Deans and the college-unit AAD teams, the AVP will lead the planning and execution of the annual and long-range fundraising and engagement strategy, with a focus on the maximization of principal and major gifts.

The successful candidate will be an excellent communicator who has exceptional judgment and the ability to work collaboratively with many constituencies. They will bring a commitment to effective management and analysis, while demonstrating innovation and inspiring growth. The AVP will have proven success in and a commitment to creating and promoting a diverse, inclusive, and respectful workplace environment and will be dedicated to the mission and core values of Cornell.

About Cornell University

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.

Its global campus footprint in Ithaca, New York City, Doha, Qatar, and other regions across the world serves 23,000 students. To provide these students with the highest level of education possible, Cornell University employs close to 10,000 staff and faculty. Its entire workforce — faculty and staff — contributes to the fabric of the community and the possibility for building on a long and recognized tradition of alumni relations and development excellence.

Cornell aspires to be the exemplary comprehensive research university for the 21st century. Faculty, staff, and students thrive at Cornell because of its unparalleled combination of quality and breadth; its open, collaborative, and innovative culture; its founding commitment to diversity and inclusion; its vibrant rural and urban campuses; and its land-grant legacy of public engagement.

Cornell is ranked 18th in the 2021 *U.S. News & World Report National Universities* and 22nd globally by *Academic Ranking of World Universities* in 2021 and hosts many top-ranking academic programs.

Cornell's Commitment to Diversity and Belonging:

Cornell is a place where intercultural skills are developed and used everywhere: throughout its diverse campus groups, with community partners, and within the classroom and workplace. Cornell recognizes people with diverse backgrounds and experiences bring great value to education, discovery, creativity, and engagement, which is reflected in its long history of [diversity and inclusion](#).

Cornell's diversity vision statement, *Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds*, was formally adopted by all university governance bodies nearly two decades ago (2000). The University's commitment to this vision holds true today.

Upholding this vision, the Cornell Alumni Affairs and Development (AAD) division is guided by the following set of beliefs and values:

AAD Creed

- We believe Cornell's founding ethos of "any person, any study" charges us to engage in our work from an inclusive, diverse, and equitable perspective.

- We believe that our support of Cornell University as an educational, research, and land-grant institution committed to public engagement is imperative for the equitable growth and success of society.
- We believe in the Cornell community's power to create opportunities for individuals, communities, and the world.
- We believe in the enduring impacts of research and seek to mirror intellectual inquiry, curiosity, enrichment and creativity in our work.
- We believe in the act of giving back and, in turn, seek to use our talents, skills, and resources to inspire others to do the same.

Values:

Service: We value providing exceptional service to the Cornell community in a manner that is culturally competent, inclusive, and equitable.

Unity: We value a united Cornell and AA&D where everyone feels a sense of belonging and interconnectedness, while we work collaboratively in pursuit of a common goal.

Respect: We value treating each other with dignity and honoring all identities, experiences, and contributions.

Excellence: We value learning as individuals, as departments, and as a division to produce exceptional outcomes.

The Role

Reporting to the Senior Associate Vice President of Alumni Affairs and Development, the Associate Vice President for Colleges and Units (AVP) is a senior leader in the Division of Alumni Affairs and Development (AAD) and a member of the Vice President's Senior Leadership Team. This is one of two positions in AAD assigned to manage Assistant/Associate Deans and Directors.

The AVP leads a team of more than 35 staff, including nine direct reports, which comprise Assistant/Associate Deans and Directors of Alumni Affairs and Development in the following colleges and units: SC Johnson College of Business, College of Engineering, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability, Cornell Ann S. Bowers College of Computing and Information Science, Johnson Museum of Art, Law School, and the College of Veterinary Medicine. Additionally, the AVP provides oversight of University Foundation Relations and Corporate Philanthropy.

The AVP responsibilities include:

- In partnership with the college-unit AAD teams, lead the planning and execution of the annual fundraising and engagement strategy and the long-range planning towards campaign success.
- Drive and track the progress toward goals and inspire innovative ideas that will identify and result in new gifts and donors.

- Strategically partner with the deans and directors, with a particular focus on the maximization of principal and major gifts.
- Actively engage as a senior leader in efforts to advance the goals, mission, and values of the division.
- Recruit, on-board, and supervise in partnership with the college dean or unit director, AAD program directors for the colleges and units.
- Be a resource for the college-unit based teams in the development of career pathing and professional training.
- Foster an inclusive and respectful environment, promoting an environment of continuous and open feedback.
- Oversee the University Foundation Relations and Corporate Philanthropy program

To accomplish these duties, they work closely with the Senior Associate Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development, AAD senior leaders, Deans/Directors, the Provost, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends to advance the university mission and priorities.

Required Qualifications and Experience

- A Bachelor's degree; A minimum of 10 years of experience in progressively responsible development leadership positions, which includes work in all functional areas of development and campaign execution (planning, implementation, management, and successful conclusion).
- Demonstrated track record of managing complex relationships and ability to provide management oversight, leadership, and direction with at least five years of significant supervisory experience.
- Strength in developing strategic and comprehensive fundraising plans and executing against these plans to achieve goals and objectives. Creating and managing a budget is critical.
- Experience collaborating directly with the most senior levels of an organization; ability to effectively strategize and engage various groups and constituents, including the dean, faculty, senior administrators, major and principal gift officers, alumni, donors, and major benefactors.
- Experience with major gifts, including cultivation through solicitation and stewardship, as well as experience working with related areas that may include planned giving, corporate and foundation relations, alumni affairs and annual fund strategies for grooming the next generation of leadership donors; success in securing gifts from various constituencies.
- Ability to articulate Cornell's mission, traditions, excellence, priorities and goals with enthusiasm, energy, and creativity and to compel others to action.
- A strong record of recruiting and developing exceptional people and fostering a transparent and inclusive work environment where collegiality is a key to success.
- Ability to develop trust and strong collaborative working relationships; experience nurturing and motivating high-level volunteers and expressing appreciation for their role in building an effective development network.
- Possess the ability to think strategically and creatively, apply critical thinking and analytical skills, and to develop and transform new ideas into executable and successful programs with an eye towards the future.
- Possess a high degree of personal integrity and a commitment to AAD's values of service, unity, respect, and excellence.

- Strong computer skills, which should include desktop software, databases, and networked information systems; familiarity and comfort in leveraging data to elevate our work.

Preferred Qualifications and Experience

- An advanced degree and strong academic credentials that will be credible to donors and alumni.
- A demonstrated track record of successful frontline fundraising for a complex institution of higher education, not-for-profit organization, or other environment of similar complexity with multiple stakeholders; previous work experience in higher education and in a hybrid centralized-decentralized fundraising model involving colleges/schools.

Cornell provides exceptional [benefits](#) that include professional development, wellness programs, health care options, generous paid leave provisions, paid holidays, employee education options, a retirement program, and children's tuition assistance. Cornell receives national recognition as an award-winning workplace for our health, well-being, sustainability, and diversity initiatives.

Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. The University is a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities. Cornell also recognizes a lawful preference in employment practices for Native Americans living on or near Indian reservations.

Division of Alumni Affairs and Development Overview

Cornell Alumni Affairs and Development (AAD), led by Fred Van Sickle, encompasses nearly 400 staff and operates with a budget of \$63 million. The staff are dedicated to engaging alumni, parents, and friends in the life of Cornell and helping Cornellians connect with one another and with the University throughout their lives. Together with more than 15,000 volunteers, AAD produces hundreds of events; helps Cornellians build community in many ways; and raises funds in support of the University's mission. With a long, distinguished history, the division remains one of the strongest and most vibrant university alumni affairs and development programs anywhere.

Alumni, parents, and friends came together to support Cornell students and stay connected during fiscal year 2020 despite numerous challenging factors, including the global pandemic and economic crisis. The University received \$712 million in new gifts and commitments — the third-highest single-year total ever raised at Cornell — from more than 39,000 donors. This included \$43 million in university annual funds, the necessary support on which Cornell relies. Cornell's sixth Giving Day was a notable part of its success, with more than \$7 million raised from 10,145 donors in 24 hours. As many students face increased financial burden during the pandemic. As many students face increased financial burden during the pandemic, [Cornell Promise](#) raised over \$24M to help all undergraduate students complete their studies at Cornell, regardless of their financial situation.

Cornell is currently in the quiet phase of a University-wide \$5B campaign to achieve further success in service to society. The previous campaign, *Cornell Now — The Campaign for Cornell* began in 2004 and concluded in December 2015 raised \$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.

Leadership



Fred Van Sickle

Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development

With three decades of experience in fundraising and alumni relations, Fred Van Sickle is the University's chief fundraiser, overseeing a team of some 360 members responsible for building alumni engagement worldwide and securing private support from individuals and institutions for the Ithaca and Cornell Tech campuses.

Before joining Cornell in January of 2016, Van Sickle served for two years as Chief Development Officer at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton, New Jersey, where he led the completion of a \$212 million campaign. Prior to his work at IAS, Van Sickle served Columbia University for 12 years, occupying three leadership roles, including Executive Vice President for University Development and Alumni Relations. He oversaw outreach to Columbia's alumni worldwide and played a pivotal role in planning, executing, and completing Columbia's \$6.1 billion campaign. He also has served as Associate Vice President for Development and Assistant Dean for Development for the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at the University of Michigan; Vice President for Alumni and Development and Secretary of the College at Lake Forest College (his undergraduate alma mater); and Director of Principal Gifts at Princeton University.



Kristen Ford

Senior Associate Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development

Kristen Ford was named Senior Associate Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development in January 2021, a role that follows 15 years in AAD. She has also served as Associate Vice President for Colleges and Units, Assistant Vice President for University Corporate and Foundation Relations, Director of New Business Development, and Senior Campaign Officer for Special Initiatives. With over 30 years of experience in higher education, Ford has also held leadership positions at Ithaca College and earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Rhode Island.

Procedure for Candidacy

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 résumé and cover letter.

Communications, nominations, applications, and inquiries concerning this search should be directed to:

**Jill Lasman, senior executive vice president or
Donna Russell, senior consultant at
617-262-1102
JLasman@LindauerGlobal.com or DRussell@LindauerGlobal.com**

Prior to submitting your résumé 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.



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