



Senior Associate Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY
cornell.edu

Send Nominations or Cover Letter and Résumé to:

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The Opportunity

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

Reporting to the Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development, the SAVP will manage the day-to-day operation of a team of approximately 200 development professionals; collaborate internally to set priorities, devise and execute strategies for meeting University-wide objectives; ensure that the management team is effective and maximizing resources to mobilize a talented staff in engaging an extraordinarily loyal and diverse group of alumni, parents, and friends; and balance ambitious goal setting and processes within an operation that supports group achievement and individual development.

As a key member of the Senior Leadership Team, the SAVP will serve as a critical thought partner to the VP for Alumni Affairs and Development in implementing the annual organizational and longer-term fundraising growth strategies creating a sustainable model for Cornell's next campaign. The SAVP will lead office-wide goal setting, organizational assessment, continuous improvement processes, and talent management. If incoming candidate desires, the SAVP may also manage a reasonable sized portfolio of key prospects for the university.

Cornell will publicly announce a university-wide \$5B campaign in October 2021 to achieve further success in service to society. As of July 5, 2021, \$2.5B has been raised toward this effort which will end in 2026.

Fiscal year 2021 was Cornell's best fundraising year to date, nearly exceeding \$800M for the first time; the Annual Fund exceeded \$50M, also a historic high for the institution. Additionally, 130K of the 200K undergraduate alumni have been engaged, achieving another set target last year.

Cornell has many key strengths including an extraordinary alumni base, deep and broad volunteer involvement, and exceptionally committed Trustee leadership. Many staff members have built their careers at Cornell and have established deep and life-long relationships with donors. As a result of these strengths, the institution has a longstanding and effective "big gift" fundraising model and is currently on track to achieve its best fundraising year in its history.

The Role

Reporting to the Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development and a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Sr. Associate Vice President will manage the day-to-day activities of leadership and major gifts fundraising programs, campaign planning, and prospect research.

The position requires an excellent and inspiring manager and a strategic, creative, and collaborative colleague. The Senior Associate Vice President will provide executive leadership and strategic direction to fundraising programs across the division, including Major Gifts, College and Unit fundraising, Foundation Relations, and Annual Giving fundraising programs. Previous success soliciting and closing seven-figure and higher gifts is required.

Responsibilities include oversight of Prospect Management and Development including, portfolio reviews, assignments, and sponsoring the \$1M+ prospect assignment committee. Ensures that fundraising managers are effective and maximizing resources to mobilize a talented staff in engaging an extraordinarily loyal and diverse group of alumni, parents, and friends.

Manages the campaign planning team and collaborates with internal partners to set priorities and devise strategies for meeting campaign objectives. Serves as a lead and collaborator on division-wide meetings, the Board of Trustees Committee on Development, and campaign co-chairs. Represents AAD in university meetings including, president and provost meetings, campaign co-chair meetings, university development strategy, and the provost's capital planning group.

Required Qualifications and Experience:

- Bachelor's degree and more than 10 years relevant experience or equivalent combination.
- A deep commitment to higher education, a keen understanding of Cornell's mission and goals, and the ability to articulate its uniqueness and relevance.
- The ability to create and lead innovative programs attuned to diverse demographics.
- Track record of success in identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and closing seven-figure and higher gifts.
- Training in and/or experience with organizational development, coaching, team building, staff recruitment, assessment.

- The intellectual depth, maturity and confidence to work with and command the respect and confidence of senior University administrators, colleagues in the Division of Alumni Affairs and Development and academic leaders.
- A commitment to professional staff development and an ability to provide thoughtful and constructive feedback in a positive, direct, and timely manner.
- Sound judgment, thoughtfulness, and attention to detail; the ability to think strategically and act decisively; and strong work ethic.
- Ability to articulate Cornell's mission, traditions, excellence, priorities and goals with enthusiasm, energy, and creativity and to compel others to action.
- Ability to respond quickly to changing business needs and priorities; ability to balance strategic thinking with tactical implementation.
- Robust quantitative and analytical skills, including the ability to understand complex financial records and make decisions based on data.
- Commitment to building and sustaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience in higher education or nonprofit management.
- Knowledge of and experience in business operations.
- Personal volunteer experience.

Skills for Success:

- **Job Skills –**
 - Uses good judgment, information, and observations to evaluate and recommend actions to support decisions and deliverables.
 - A strong sense of operational efficiency combined with the ability to utilize data to make informed decisions.
 - Understands, interprets, and applies regulations, policies, and contracts to deliver effective results.
 - Conversant with using computer technology in the workplace.
- **Inclusiveness –**
 - Demonstrates the ability to communicate across difference to create a collaborative, collegial, and caring community.
 - Increases cooperation, honesty, openness, and a welcoming environment for all and speaks up when others are being excluded or treated inappropriately.
 - Supports/increases participation of key and diverse employees in career/professional development opportunities and in campus/community involvement.
 - Actively supports work/life integration in the workplace.
 - Recruits, hires and engages high performing diverse employees.
- **Adaptability –**
 - Anticipates and adapts to changing priorities and additional demands.

- Is flexible, open and receptive to new information, ideas and approaches which enhance Cornell's capacity to thrive in the future.
- Embraces, promotes and implements change.
- Modifies one's preferred way of doing things when it benefits the whole focusing on long-term vision rather than short-term gains.
- **Self-Development –**
 - Is self-aware; seeks and acts upon performance feedback.
 - Seeks and acts on opportunities for development; takes measures to ensure personal well-being and balance.
 - Works to continuously learn and improve.
 - Applies learning to evolving assignments.
- **Communication –**
 - Expresses thoughts clearly, both orally and in writing.
 - Demonstrates effective listening skills; seeks to understand and be understood.
 - Asks questions and shares knowledge and information to help others clearly understand processes and desired results.
 - Gives, receives and acts upon helpful and timely feedback.
- **Teamwork –**
 - Shows respect, compassion and empathy for others, even in difficult situations, building an environment of trust.
 - Works effectively and cooperatively with others, willingly admitting mistakes and offering apologies.
 - Acknowledges the support and contributions of others, involving them as appropriate when outcomes will impact their work.
 - Has a positive attitude and understands how behaviors impact others.
- **Service-Minded –**
 - Is diplomatic, courteous and welcoming, striving to satisfy external and internal customers.
 - Supports ideas, solutions and changes to processes to ensure high quality outcomes.
 - Reaches out in a timely and responsive manner to resolve problems and conflicts.
 - Negotiates well, finding and orchestrating win-win solutions.
- **Stewardship –**
 - Strives to develop and implement best practices; encourages others to adopt a culture of sustainability and efficiency.
 - Demonstrates high standards of personal conduct and owns the consequences of one's own actions.
 - Exercises sound and ethical judgment no matter how difficult or contrary; considers environmental, economic, compliance and social impacts in decision-making.
 - Shows commitment to unit and university goals and delivers results.
- **Innovation –**

- Looks for advancements in products, processes, services, technologies or ideas.
- Identifies opportunities in challenges and shows initiative to make changes.
- Demonstrates innovative, creative and informed risk taking.
- Shows foresight and imagination to see possibilities, opportunities and trends.

Responsibilities/Essential Functions:

Strategy for fundraising programs:

- Provide executive leadership and strategic direction to fundraising programs across the division including Major Gifts, College and Unit fundraising, Foundation Relations, and Annual Giving fundraising programs.
- Provide oversight of Prospect Management and Development including portfolio reviews, assignments, and sponsoring the \$1M+ prospect assignment committee.
- Ensure that fundraising managers are effective and maximizing resources to mobilize a talented staff in engaging an extraordinarily loyal and diverse group of alumni, parents, and friends.
- Oversees the campaign planning team and collaborates with internal partners to set priorities and devise strategies for meeting campaign objectives.

Management and administration:

- Provide oversight and direction to leadership and staff within portfolio.
- Actively manage team performance.
- Partner with direct reports to develop and support the workforce.
- Assist in developing team goals and evaluating progress.
- Develop and oversee annual budget.

Division-wide leadership:

- Represent domestic agenda items for University Gift Acceptance Committee (monthly)
- Serve as the division lead on Solicitation and Gift Agreement Review procedures
- Plan and staff activities of the Board of Trustees Committee on Development (Oct, Jan, May)
- Facilitate new gifts and commitments forecasting meetings (quarterly)
- Convene AAD division-wide fundraising managers meetings (quarterly)
- Distribute AAD dashboard summaries (monthly) and gift officer summaries (quarterly)

Participate and serve as a representative of AAD:

- President (TBD) and Provost Meetings (TBD)
- Campaign Co-Chair Meetings (monthly)
- University Development Strategy (quarterly)
- Participate on the Provost's Capital Planning Group (quarterly)

Personal and professional development:

- Seek out and attend university and other training programs essential for job performance.
- Keep current with existing and emerging technologies and methodologies that are relevant to the job position.

- Continuously maintain all required educational and position qualifications to fulfill job requirements.
- Other duties as assigned.

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.

About Cornell University

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 and AAD's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

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](#).

The Cornell Alumni Affairs and Development (AAD) division is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workplace community.

“As stewards of this great university, it is our team’s responsibility to build a culture reflective of the demographic evolution of our country—not only in our work with alumni, donors, and volunteer leaders, but also internally. Although no institution is perfect, we have witnessed, over centuries, the capacity that higher education has as a force for good. We have also seen the power of volunteerism and philanthropy in amplifying a community’s civic voice. It is for these reasons—and the even more straightforward reason that an inclusive and diverse culture makes us all more effective and successful—that we must redouble our commitment to building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive AAD.” — Fred Van Sickle, Vice President, AAD

AAD is guided by the following mission, beliefs, and values:

Mission: To advance Cornell’s mission, we foster lifelong engagement and philanthropy through a commitment of time, talent, and treasure.

Creed :

- We believe that our support of Cornell University as an educational, research, and land-grant institution is imperative for the 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 giving back and, in turn, seek to use our talents, skills, and resources to inspire others to do the same.

Values:

Service
Unity
Respect
Excellence

Division of Alumni Affairs and Development Overview

Cornell Alumni Affairs and Development (AAD), led by Fred Van Sickle, encompasses approximately 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.

[Click here to view the organizational breakdown structure of this department.](#)



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 400 members responsible for building alumni engagement worldwide and securing private support from individuals and institutions for the University.

Before joining Cornell in January of 2016, Fred served Columbia University as Executive Vice President for Alumni and Development. During his 12 years there he played a pivotal role in planning, executing, and completing the \$6.1 billion Columbia Campaign. Fred also served as chief development officer at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey; 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.

Fred holds a Master of Education degree from Harvard University and a Doctor of Education degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He serves as a board member of the Finger Lakes Land Trust and the Food Bank of the Southern Tier.

Ithaca & the Finger Lakes

Cornell's main campus is in [Ithaca, New York](#), one of the [best college towns](#) in the country. Located at the south end of Cayuga Lake in the heart of the beautiful [Finger Lakes](#) region, Ithaca offers a breathtaking landscape and a lively community with shops, art galleries, and great places to eat.

The local slogan, "Ithaca is Gorges" refers to the 100+ gorges and waterfalls located within 10 miles of downtown. The largest, 215-foot Taughannock Falls, is three stories taller than Niagara Falls. Along with the waterfalls, gorges and beautiful lakefront, the surrounding county offers access to 28,000 acres of public forestland for hiking, mountain biking, and outdoor recreation.

Popular activities include dining at local Ithaca restaurants, visiting museums and galleries, attending the theater, and enjoying the live musical attractions at the numerous music venues and events in the region.

The Ithaca community itself is centered around Downtown Ithaca and its pedestrian mall, the Ithaca Commons, but Ithaca encompasses several adjacent towns and villages. Each community has its own unique character and identity, and each offers visitors its own warm welcome.

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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