



VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEVELOPMENT & ALUMNI RELATIONS
[NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION](#)
LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO



Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with the New Mexico State University Foundation in the search for a Vice President for Development & Alumni Relations.

The Vice President for Development & Alumni Relations will provide strategic vision and ensure operational excellence for a comprehensive development and alumni relations program. The Vice President will provide leadership and oversight of the growth and development of a newly reorganized alumni relations program. The Vice President will serve as an NMSU Foundation Senior Leadership Team member and will work closely with the team to create and execute strategies to achieve University-wide goals through philanthropic growth and alumni engagement.

Founded in 1888, New Mexico State University (NMSU) is the state's oldest institution and New Mexico's flagship land-grant University. It is designated as a Hispanic-Serving and space-grant institution and serves a truly diverse population. Approximately 30 percent of NMSU students are first-generation college students, and over 60 percent are Hispanic. NMSU is among the best in the nation at moving students from the lowest income tier to the top. It has four campuses, a satellite learning center in Albuquerque, cooperative extension offices in all 33 counties of New Mexico, and 12 agriculture research and science centers.

The New Mexico State University Foundation (NMSUF) is a privately governed, independent nonprofit organization that supports New Mexico State University. The Foundation consistently strives for trust, accountability, and excellence in its constituent relationships by promoting the values of fiduciary duty, leadership, teamwork, and the highest standard of ethics among its employees and volunteers. The Foundation is committed to upholding and preserving public and private trust while at the same time protecting the privacy of donors and the confidentiality of its competitive strategies.

The Foundation operates in alignment with University leadership and the NMSU Board of Regents. The Foundation's primary purposes are two-fold: to secure, manage, steward, and protect sustainable sources of private support that provide a margin of excellence for the University to fulfill its land-grant mission of education, research, extension, outreach, and public service; and to elevate alums and donor connections within the statewide NMSU system.

The NMSU Foundation raises \$20M annually with 17K donors and aims to increase to \$40-50M per year to grow the Foundation's assets to surpass the \$1B mark in the next five years. The most recent capital campaign, *Aggie Discovery!* ended in 2019, raising over \$125M. The Foundation plans to launch its next capital campaign in approximately three years. To achieve this new level of support and growth, the Foundation Board has invested significant resources to expand staffing, plan big, and elevate the overall program. The successful candidate will bring a collaborative, strength-based leadership approach that engages the Board, Foundation team, and the University community in growing the philanthropic ambitions of the Foundation.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Vice President for Development & Alumni Relations will report to the Chief Executive Officer of the New Mexico State University Foundation, Dr. Sylvia Y. Acosta, and will serve on the Foundation's Senior Leadership Team. The Vice President for Development & Alumni Relations will oversee a division comprised of development officers, and advancement services and alumni relations staff.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The New Mexico State University Foundation is governed by a highly engaged thirty-member Board of Directors—a dedicated group that provides the organization with time, wisdom, and resources. The Board of Directors is an independent fiduciary governing body that establishes policy and budgetary guidelines, provides strategic leadership, and ensures that the Foundation is aligned with New Mexico State University. The Board comprises highly respected leaders from across the country, most of whom are NMSU Alumni. The Board is led by Chair Christian Hendrickson '97, Vice Chair Louis Vega '92, Immediate Past Chair Kyle Louvar '98, Amy Hummer, and Aaron De Los Santos '04.

FROM THE CHAIR

When I arrived on the New Mexico State University campus as a student, I knew I had landed in a spot that was truly unique. Not only was I struck by the natural beauty of the area and the majestic Organ Mountains, but I could sense a difference here not felt on other campuses. I relished learning and engaging with my peers in a close-knit, supportive, and truly diverse environment, and was able to study, grow, and thrive in a beautiful, quiet, and peaceful setting. A large number of my fellow students were also the first in their family to attend college, and I watched as so many of our excellent faculty embraced the noble mission of ensuring these first-gen students thrived, all while promoting extensive collaboration, unparalleled access, and cutting-edge research.

Currently, NMSU has over 140,000 living Aggie Alumni and is growing. Our alumni base loves NMSU and is fiercely loyal to the University. Dedicated, practical, hard-working, and down-to-earth are just some of the adjectives routinely used to describe our Aggies. Graduates of NMSU have humbly left their mark all over the world, and as the state's land-grant institution, many of our graduates return to their rural roots of agriculture and ranching, where they live as hard-working citizens, making a difference in their communities and across the nation and globe.

The campus also enjoys an undeniably loyal athletic fan base, and on game days the fight song and chants of "GO AGGIES" can be heard throughout campus. The only thing we perhaps love as much is the year-round abundance of green chili, a staple in most New Mexicans' diet!

We hope you will choose to come, explore, and perhaps join the NMSU Foundation's unified and dedicated team, and become part a group of passionate "all-in" professionals poised to accomplish amazing things, who get to make real and positive differences in the lives of so many on behalf of our great University. Thank you for considering this opportunity to join our team.

—Christian Hendrickson, Chair, New Mexico State University Foundation Board of Directors

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Vice President for Development & Alumni Relations will

- lead strategic planning and delivery of development and alumni relations programs;
- develop and execute strategies to maximize a comprehensive, best-in-class development program for the Foundation to increase philanthropic support and expand NMSU's visibility and importance among critical influencers, alums, and donors at all levels;
- direct an effective development program that enhances annual giving, expands the major-gift prospect base, secures transformational donations, and leverages relationships with corporations and foundations;
- work in partnership with Foundation and University leadership to plan, develop, and roll out a comprehensive multi-year campaign designed to generate significant philanthropic support for the goals of NMSU and the Foundation;
- establish and expand alumni association affinity groups and chapters;
- in collaboration with the Foundation CEO and the Senior Leadership Team, create a compelling and integrated fundraising strategy with measurable, aggressive, and attainable programmatic and fundraising goals;
- ensure that fundraising and alumni strategies and tactics align with Foundation priorities as established by the Foundation;
- lead the implementation of donor-centric and alumni-centric strategies across the Foundation that consistently challenge each aspect of operational processes to improve efficiency and increase donor satisfaction and alumni engagement;
- provide vision and leadership for the development team and in partnership with the Foundation CEO on the planning and execution of fundraising and alumni priorities while balancing expectations and resources required to achieve the agreed-upon goals;
- create a culture of philanthropy among board and committee members and staff to provide meaningful and valuable engagement with all NMSU stakeholders;
- create a culture of appreciation, involvement, and engagement for alumni;
- in partnership with the External Relations team, coordinate outreach to alums and donors to develop a coordinated approach to donor relations and stewardship, donor cultivation, and the qualification of prospective donors;
- spearhead a development and alumni approach that aligns the strategic value of prospect development, marketing, communications, and donor relations to elevate fundraising and alumni engagement;
- expand and grow a cohesive, high-caliber team;
- increase the number of alumni chapters and alumni participants;
- in partnership with the Chief of Talent & Culture, lead the recruitment, training, and retention of high-performing members of the development team;
- cultivate a culture of lifelong learning to develop prepared and accountable development professionals;
- partner with the Foundation CEO to foster an environment that rewards new ideas and risk-taking, builds confidence, encourages teamwork, celebrates current achievements, and establishes clear expectations for future success;
- cultivate strong relationships and communication with administrators, deans, faculty, and staff throughout NMSU;
- ensure that the team has a service orientation concerning internal and external constituencies;
- benchmark the Foundation's development and alumni performance against best-in-class examples among peer institutions; and
- oversee a personal portfolio of principal gift donors and potential donors.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The New Mexico State University Foundation seeks a Vice President for Development & Alumni Relations with

- a commitment to the mission of the New Mexico State University Foundation—to foster long-term relationships with alums, supporters, and the community to secure, manage, steward, and protect a sustainable source of private resources that will enhance the ability of New Mexico State University to fulfill its land grant mission for generations to come;
- a demonstrated ability to plan and implement a comprehensive development and alumni program based on best practices, particularly in pre-campaign planning and campaign implementation, including experience working in a complex university environment and managing significant change;
- experience successfully leading a growing development and alumni program;
- demonstrated experience and success in coaching and mentoring development and alumni professionals;
- a demonstrated collaborative approach to management that brings out the best in staff and yields pride and ownership;
- an ability to create a culture where openness, communication, and teamwork are valued;
- experience working with administrators, deans, faculty, and staff and an understanding of the advancement function (development, operations, alum relations, public relations, and marketing);
- proven competence in preparing and managing an operating budget, including experience in creating credible philanthropic and financial forecasting models in partnership with leadership; and;
- an ability to set and achieve fundraising goals aggressively but realistically.

A bachelor's degree is required for this position, as is at least eight years of experience as a leader in development, campaign management, and operations.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$220,000 to \$240,000 annually. The New Mexico State University Foundation offers a generous and comprehensive package of benefits, including incentive compensation, a 15.15% non-elective employer contribution, and 36 days of paid time off annually.

LOCATION

The New Mexico State University Foundation is in Las Cruces, New Mexico, 45 miles north of El Paso, Texas. On average, Las Cruces sees over 300 days of sunshine annually, which means a great deal of time to enjoy the beautiful local scenery, such as the Organ Mountains and the stunning desert landscapes. Las Cruces is ideal for job seekers who enjoy hiking, mountain biking, and birdwatching in the heart of the historic Mesilla Valley between the Organ Mountains, Robledo Mountains, and Picacho Peak. Despite being one of the largest cities in New Mexico, with 114,00 residents, Las Cruces has a cozy small-town feel, which makes it easy to build relationships with the locals and feel engaged with the community. The city is filled with locally owned restaurants, coffee shops, and retailers, which makes it easy to support small business owners and experience a unique taste of the city's cultural identity. In addition, Las Cruces hosts many events throughout the year, ranging from music festivals to farmers' markets, creating a vibrant and lively atmosphere highlighting the city's diversity and charm. The Las Cruces residents benefit from the low cost of living in the region. The median home price in Las Cruces is \$329,000, well below the national average of \$436,800.

FOUNDATION LEADERS

Sylvia Y. Acosta, Ph.D. '10

Dr. Acosta serves as the CEO of the New Mexico State University Foundation. Dr. Acosta is a proud daughter of the Rio Grande region. Raised in El Paso as a child of migrant workers, Dr. Acosta is a first-generation college graduate. She earned a doctorate in Educational Administration at New Mexico State University while serving as an Assistant Dean in NMSU's College of Business. In her dissertation *Corazon a Corazon*, her research was specifically focused on the philanthropic motivations and priorities of NMSU Alumni throughout the country and their relational connectedness to their *alma mater*. Her impressive career has provided her with an unrivaled grasp of institutional philanthropy and apex-level leadership of nonprofit organizations. Her professional experiences have allowed her to develop a profound comprehension of the distinctive and complex multi-cultural composition that thrives throughout the state of New Mexico and the Borderlands region.

Dr. Acosta's leadership journey includes transformative roles at prominent institutions. At the University of California, Irvine (UCI), she served as the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Constituent Development and Principal Gifts, contributing to the success of the monumental \$1 billion Shaping the Future campaign and with her team raising \$280 million during her tenure. Her impact extended to the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), where she led a \$200 million fundraising campaign and increased participation in alumni relations by over 200%. As CEO of YWCA El Paso del Norte Region, she eliminated a 20-year deficit and she set visionary goals, achieving financial sustainability, and securing a historic \$20 million gift.

Dr. Acosta's commitment to impactful leadership is reflected not only in her accomplishments but also in her role as an instructor at the George Bush School of Government and Public Service. Here, she educates on the nuances of Latino alumni engagement and donor prospecting, contributing to the development of future leaders in the field.

Her commitment to advocating for positive change earned her accolades including the Woman of Impact award, State of Texas Child Advocate of the Year, and recognition as finalist as El Pasoan of the Year. With her academic background, diverse leadership roles, and influence, Dr. Acosta remains committed to advancing economic equity, educational access, and nonprofit leadership.

Christian Hendrickson '97

Christian Hendrickson serves as the Chair of the Foundation's Board of Directors and sits on its Executive Committee.

Hendrickson is a civil trial lawyer who focuses on cases involving disputes arising out of commercial contracts, financial matters, construction, business, and real estate issues. He is a member (partner) of Sherman & Howard, the oldest law firm in Colorado. It is also one of its largest (with offices in Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and Nevada). He regularly practices in state and federal courts, primarily in Colorado, and in nationwide arbitration proceedings. In addition to his litigation practice, he works on legislative and regulatory matters and other alternative dispute resolution proceedings. He is an arbitrator on the Panel of the American Arbitration Association and a member of the faculty of the National Institute for Trial Advocacy. He has held leadership positions in his law firm and has served on several other Boards in the Denver area.

Hendrickson graduated in 1997 with honors from New Mexico State University with a major in Government and a supplemental major in Law and Society. He received a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Colorado School of Law in 2000 and served as a law clerk to a Colorado District Court Judge to start his law career. He focuses his spare time on his three children and enjoys the outdoors, particularly running, bicycling, skiing, hockey, and golf.

Louis A. Vega '92

Louis Vega serves as the Vice Chair of the Foundation's Board of Directors and sits on its Executive Committee.

Vega serves as President of Dow North America and Vice President of Government Affairs, Advocacy of Dow North America. He is a 25-year Dow executive whose career expertise, strong business acumen, and leadership of significant growth projects and business development programs are augmented through his extensive international experience and postings in Horgen, Switzerland; Washington DC; Dubai, UAE; Midland, MI; New York, NY; and Melbourne, Australia. He was Chief of Staff of the Office of the Chairman and CEO from 2011-2017 and was later named Vice President of Dow's Olympic & Sports Solutions business from 2014-2019. He most recently served as President and Managing Director of Dow Australia and New Zealand from 2016 to 2019. Before joining Dow, Vega's career was a progressive series of roles in Washington, DC, from Capitol Hill to the Executive Branch, over 12 years.

Vega is a passionate leader who advocates for and works towards full equality for all and strives to show the power of diversity to bottom-line results and enterprise strategy success. A member of the Trilateral Commission and many nonprofit Boards of Directors, a philanthropist, and a proud multi-year member of the OUTstanding LGBT+ Role Models list, Vega was also named to Australia's 50 outstanding LGBTI business executives of 2018 and 2019 and is a Distinguished Alumni Award recipient from New Mexico State University.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. **Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of the New Mexico State University Foundation and the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the prospectus.** Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit: [Vice President for Development & Alumni Relations, New Mexico State University Foundation](#).

To nominate a candidate, please contact Anne Johnson at: annejohnson@aspenleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.