



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ALUMNI AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

DENISON UNIVERSITY

Granville, Ohio



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Denison University in the search for an Executive Director for Alumni and Family Engagement.

The Executive Director for Alumni and Family Engagement will serve as the chief engagement officer of the university and will execute a new strategic plan for alumni engagement as part of an integrated advancement model, which has become a key goal within the university's newly adopted comprehensive fundraising campaign. The Executive Director and their team will build and coordinate an institution-wide approach to activating alumni, parents, and families to support Denison University and its students. The Executive Director will lead, organize, collaborate, and evaluate engagement efforts across the university and will develop and implement a leading program to inspire the involvement of Denison alumni. The results of this work will develop deeper connections with Denison, add value to the lives of its alumni, drive an increase in philanthropic investments, provide meaningful opportunities for service to the university and its alumni, and make full use of the talents of Denison alumni through the development of a life-long engagement model.

Denison University was founded in 1831 as the Granville Literary and Theological Institution and renamed Denison University in the mid-1850s. Denison is one of the earliest colleges to be established beyond the Allegheny Mountains and north of the Ohio River. Founded by ambitious frontier people who were determined to nurture leadership for the nation, its focus on preparing effective leaders and active citizens remains an essential part of Denison's mission today. The university is one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges with a vibrant, residential community of 2,300 undergraduate students and a student to faculty ratio of 9:1, ensuring that students are more than a number, and that they become active participants in their own educational experience. The university offers 65 academic programs and four pre-professional programs that lead to three undergraduate degrees. Denison University fields 26 athletic teams that compete at the NCAA Division III level in the North Coast Athletic Conference. Denison's extracurricular options for students include more than 160 student organizations that provide over 600 opportunities for campus leadership. These opportunities are provided on a pedestrian-friendly campus designed by pioneering landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. The more than 900-acre campus features the 250-acre hilltop section, a 350-acre Biological Reserve, and historic Denison Golf Club. With an endowment of \$1.1 billion, Denison commits over \$70 million towards student financial aid each year in the form of need-based and merit-based scholarships. Success for Denison students continues after graduation with 92 percent of graduates employed, in graduate school, or completing service within six months of graduation. Ninety six percent of Denison's 28,000 alumni are working in their desired field or position, or on their way to achieving their professional goals.

Denison University promotes active learning to deliver on its mission to inspire and educate students to become autonomous thinkers, discerning moral agents, and active citizens of a democratic society. It provides a curriculum that balances breadth with depth, building academic specialization upon a liberal arts foundation in the arts, sciences, social sciences, and humanities. A Denison education is more than what happens in the classroom. The focus of student life is on the whole person, providing a living-learning environment sensitive to the individual needs yet grounded in a concern for community.

Denison University is nationally recognized for the value of its prestigious academic programs and for its welcoming community. *Business Insider* has ranked Denison #43 in “Smartest Liberal Arts Colleges in America” by analyzing average standardized test scores. In its lists of “America’s Top Colleges” and “America’s Most Entrepreneurial Colleges,” *Forbes* lists Denison among the very best. Denison is among the top 50 best value liberal arts colleges according to *Kiplinger’s* and is ranked 11th in the *New York Times* most economically diverse top colleges. *Washington Monthly* focuses on what colleges are doing in response to social inequalities and ranks Denison high for social mobility. The university also ranks high for undergraduate service community hours, as well as postgraduate service opportunities with Peace Corps, Teach for America, and City Year.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director for Alumni and Family Engagement will report to the Campaign Manager and Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement, Billie Handa. The Executive Director will oversee a team of ten staff.

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

The Executive Director serves as the chief alumni engagement officer for the university and is responsible for implementing a strategic direction for alumni engagement across the institution. The Executive Director will have the opportunity to lead a team of committed professionals who are focused on building a relevant, exciting, and leading program that captures the commitment and interests of our alumni. We seek a leader who will build a program that will use this enthusiasm to establish long-lasting and effective partnerships and create experiences that support our students and fellow alumni. Additionally, this individual will support the institution’s bold vision of providing students with a life-shaping liberal arts education that unlocks their potential to be the architects of their own lives.

The successful candidate should be committed to building a program based on leading trends within the field of alumni engagement, as well as launching new models that connect alumni around the strategic priorities of the institution. The Executive Director should be committed to coaching for performance, comfortable collaborating with a wide constituency of both internal and external partners and experienced in creating volunteer opportunities that are both rewarding and impactful. Our next leader must be capable of articulating the case for support around the life-long, transformative power of a liberal arts education.

This is an exciting time to join our community as Denison embraces the powerful impact of growing an engaged and committed alumni body. Demonstrating this importance, I am pleased to share that alumni engagement is one of the central priorities of the university's new strategic plan, as well as one of the three primary pillars of our current comprehensive campaign.

If you are looking for an opportunity to join a team focused on building a leading engagement program that celebrates collaboration and nurtures a can-do spirit, I hope you will consider this position. We are a team that is dedicated to fostering an environment of respect, integrity, adaptability, and a commitment to excellence.

—Greg Bader, Vice President for Institutional Advancement

DENISON UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ANTI-RACISM

Denison University is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism for its students, and for its employees and it is striving to be better and more accountable for its efforts. The university has embarked on a journey of candid and critical self-reflection, taking a deeper look into the role it can and should play in correcting the country's long and painful history of racism. This begins at home with a recognition of Denison's achievements in diversity, equity, and inclusion and acknowledgment of the places where it has fallen short. A college campus should be a supportive space in which to confront the past, delve into the structures that shape contemporary society, and find ways to work together to create a better future. Institutions like Denison, steeped in the values of fairness and equality, carry the responsibility and privilege of spreading positive change throughout society.

[Denison Forward](#) is the university's commitment to changing the way it thinks and acts—and to spark, nurture, and demand that change in society as well. Denison Forward is a thoughtful, inclusive, and data-driven approach to understanding the road behind and carving a better path ahead. Among other recommendations, this action plan calls for increasing recruitment and retention of a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff; including antiracism as a part of professional development efforts; and making sure Denison students, particularly those who may face obstacles due to structural racism, have the resources and opportunities to launch into their chosen career paths.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director for Alumni and Family Engagement will

- lead, organize, inspire, and coach a team of Alumni and Family Engagement professionals;
- ensure coordination of all alumni engagement efforts across the university and collaborate with university advancement partners (communications, career services, athletics, admissions, and student life) in support of the larger organizational mission;
- serve as the primary campus leader for alumni engagement on issues relating to operations, policy interpretation, initiatives, program assessments, and announcements;
- implement an effective strategy, supporting tactics, and continual review around alumni engagement that inspires active involvement;
- design programs, targeted communications, and provide relevant services that support the strategic plan of both Denison University and the Alumni and Family Engagement office, while serving all alumni, generating broad interest, and encouraging sustained involvement;
- include parents and families within Alumni and Family Engagement programming to inspire their involvement and philanthropy;
- develop processes and implement and track metrics to assess engagement success using CASE Alumni Engagement Metrics (AEM) standards;
- serve as the primary point person for setting the new campaign's alumni engagement goal and for assuring the successful attainment of that goal;

- successfully utilize Raiser’s Edge NXT CRM and other technologies to analyze data and evaluate trends to determine new tactics, reprioritize programs, and modification of strategy to assist in reaching goals;
- serve as an ambassador of Denison University locally, nationally, and internationally;
- lead, schedule, and execute the support of the college’s Alumni Council and work with the Council’s leadership to maximize both the success and impact of their work;
- work collaboratively within a diverse community with multiple constituencies, building cooperation and consensus; and
- monitor and manage all relevant budgets and expenditures, ensuring full compliance with Denison University policies and procedures.

LEADERSHIP

Billie Handa

Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement

Billie earned her B.A. in global studies and M.Ed. in educational administration from Ohio University. She has worked as a professional fundraiser since 2006, starting with the American Cancer Society and working her way into higher education at Ohio University, where she served as the Director of Annual Giving. Billie came to Denison as Director of the Annual Fund in January 2017. In November of 2020, she was promoted to her current position of Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Campaign Manager. Billie is a first-generation college graduate who loves working with the University's alumni, families, and friends in support of current and future Denison students.

Greg Bader

Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Greg Bader earned a B.S. in education from Bowling Green State University and holds a M.A. in higher education and student affairs from Ohio State University. As Vice President for Institutional Advancement role, Bader leads the talented and seasoned institutional advancement team in continuing to advance strategies related to gift planning, stewardship, the Denison Annual Fund, the Office of Major Gifts, campaign planning, and alumni relations efforts. Bader has worked in advancement for over 22 years and joined the Denison community in 2003. He previously managed student calling, young alumni programs, and both reunion and leadership giving.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Denison University seeks an Executive Director for Alumni and Family Engagement with

- a commitment to the mission of Denison University—to inspire and educate students to become autonomous thinkers, discerning moral agents, and active citizens of a democratic society;
- an understanding of contemporary approaches in alumni engagement including the ways in which alumni engagement inspires philanthropy;
- experience with volunteer and board management best practices;
- a history of leadership, management, and supervisory experience that includes coaching high-performing teams;
- excellent planning and budgetary management skills;
- an ability to work and communicate effectively on a team, across organizational structures, and collaborate with diverse populations;
- a history of utilizing data points to support effective decision making on behalf of engagement programs;

- excellent verbal and written communication skills; and
- an understanding of basic marketing principles.

A bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience is required for this position as is at least eight years of applicable experience in progressively responsible leadership positions within alumni relations, university advancement or nonprofit management.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Denison University offers a competitive salary and [comprehensive benefits](#).

LOCATION

This position is located in Granville, Ohio.

COVID-19

In its ongoing efforts to support the health of its community and continue to operate its campus safely, Denison University requires all new employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 including boosters within the timeline guidance recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention unless a Denison-authorized exemption is approved prior to the first date of employment. More information and resources regarding this policy as a condition of employment is provided [here](#).

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Denison University as well as the responsibilities and qualifications stated in the prospectus.*** All inquiries will be held in confidence.

To apply for this position, visit:

[Executive Director for Alumni and Family Engagement, Denison University.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Clare McCully, claremccully@aspenleadershipgroup.com.