



SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ANNUAL GIVING

[THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON](#)

REMOTE LOCATION



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with The University of Akron in the search for a Senior Director of Annual Giving.

The Senior Director of Annual Giving will drive the overall strategic direction, management, and growth of The University of Akron's annual giving program. The Senior Director will lead efforts to support alumni relations outreach through direct response, monthly giving, special campaigns, tribute and memorial, workplace, mid-level giving, and management of the student call center while supporting and advancing key equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts in their overall fundraising. The Senior Director will be responsible for an annual revenue goal of at least \$1 million.

The University of Akron (UA) was built on a hilltop in Akron—a word meaning *the highest point*. For over 150 years, that is where The University of Akron has set its sights, rising from one peak to another in engineering, business, technology, health care, and the arts and sciences. Bound and determined to meet every challenge, UA continues to climb, to forge new paths, and reach new heights. The University of Akron is a vibrant community within metropolitan Akron, with more than 80 buildings on 218 acres. UA is a vital urban research university inspired by its people, its promise, and its place. The university is firmly anchored in a great American city, and driven by collaboration, partnership, and a steadfast determination to provide opportunity and success to all learners.

The institution now known as The University of Akron was founded as Buchtel College in 1870 by the Ohio Universalist Convention, which was strongly influenced by the efforts, energy, and financial support of Akronites, particularly industrialist John R. Buchtel. By 1907 Buchtel College's emphasis on local rather than denominational interests let it to become a private, nondenominational school. The college's strong ties to the community prompted Buchtel College trustees to transfer the institution and its assets to the city of Akron in 1913, changing its name to The University of Akron in 1926.

The University of Akron, a publicly assisted metropolitan institution, strives to develop enlightened members of society. It offers comprehensive programs from associate through doctoral levels; pursues a vigorous agenda of research in the arts, sciences, and professions; and provides service to the community. UA pursues excellence in undergraduate education and distinction in selected areas of graduate instruction, inquiry, and creative activity.

Today, the university attracts students from a variety of backgrounds and geographical locations, with fall semester representation totaling nearly 15,000 students from Ohio, around the U.S., and 70 foreign countries. UA offers a wide variety of in-demand undergraduate and graduate programs, including many that are recognized nationally for their excellence. Courses are also offered across the region and online. Students choose from 200 undergraduate majors, minors, and certificates, including the only aerospace engineering bachelor's degree program of its kind in the U.S. outside the Air Force, all taught by expert faculty and enhanced by internships and other hands-on learning.

The University of Akron is ranked number one in the world for polymer science and plastics engineering by *EduRank*, which comes as no surprise considering the world's first courses in rubber chemistry were offered at the institution beginning in 1909 and the Rubber Technical Institute was established there in 1942. UA's College of Business is also highly ranked and is among the top 1% in the world offering business degrees that are doubly accredited in business and accounting. It has been named the top undergraduate business school in Northeast Ohio by *Poets and Quants* and has the number five online MBA program in the U.S. according to *onlinemastersdegree.org*. One hundred percent of nurse anesthesia students passed the national certification exam on their first attempt in 2022. UA is home to the National Museum of Psychology, the only one of its kind in the U.S. The university also boasts the number two e-sports college program in the U.S. according to *dailygame.net*. The University of Akron is a three-time National School of the Year, awarded by the National Association of College and University Residence Halls for the outstanding achievements of UA residence hall organizations and affiliated groups.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Senior Director of Annual Giving will report to the Assistant Vice President, Principal Gifts, William Cole. The Senior Director will oversee one direct report.

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

The University of Akron invites your addition to a vibrant team advancing a great university. Our institution is an integral part of Akron and the region, leading efforts in the visual and performing arts, engineering and polymer science as well as establishing key partnerships with business, governmental, and civic interests through a range of collegiate and professional networking opportunities.

Through the "We Rise Together—The Campaign for The University of Akron," resources are realized which allow innovative ideas to form and blossom, drawing talented faculty and students to campus from around the world. A dynamic re-imagining of the Polsky building, a key component in the revitalization of downtown Akron, is but one creative example of an initiative elevating UA into the national conversation.

As Senior Director of Annual Giving, your work will advance UA's mission as we enter an exciting new phase of growth and development; your efforts and expertise in annual fundraising critically shaping the trajectory of our success. You will be pivotal in cultivating relationships with alumni, parents, and friends, while also attracting new supporters to join our cause.

Teamwork lies at the heart of what we do; our fundraising success, and your ability to thrive in a collaborative environment will help us achieve even greater heights. Our Advancement team, like our university, fosters an environment nurturing intellectual curiosity, and promoting diversity and inclusion. We communicate the importance of philanthropy in strengthening the educational opportunities, scholarship, innovative programs, and facilities our students use. Our collective efforts express the wish of the university's friends—to prepare the graduates and leaders of tomorrow.

We are confident in your talents and welcome your possible addition to our organization. Your efforts and commitment will help shape a brighter future for our academic community. We are excited to embark on this journey together.

—Kimberly M. Cole, Vice President of Advancement and
Executive Director, The University of Akron Foundation

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Our very survival as a democratic society depends on our willingness to work toward, and achieve, equality for all.

—Gary L. Miller, President

The University of Akron affirms the importance and value of diversity within the student body, and among its faculty, staff, administration, and governing Board of Trustees. UA values and respects the humanity of every individual from every background, and it embraces the diversity that defines The University of Akron and has so profoundly enriched its community.

The educational programs, curricula, and activities of The University of Akron reflect its multicultural society and global economy and endeavor to provide opportunities for students to learn more about people that are different from themselves. UA is committed to maintaining a community that recognizes, values, supports, and validates the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of the community; and encourages everyone to strive to reach their fullest potential. It is equally committed to expanding opportunity to include those historically or presently marginalized or excluded.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Director of Annual Giving will

- drive strategy, planning, implementation, and performance of the annual giving and engagement program, translating key priorities into actionable fundraising targets leading to sustainable growth in participation of local and national alumni across all direct response channels;
- use a variety of inputs (e.g., forecasting, segmentation, benchmarking) to set annual fundraising revenue targets;
- ensure a holistic, collaborative, data-driven, and equity-centered approach that achieves annual goals and objectives and establishes vision for year over year growth and success;
- define, monitor, and track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) including donor acquisition, retention, and income per donor;
- lead team and external partners to plan, execute, measure, and expand campaigns, and to support omni channel fundraising efforts that drive continuous revenue expansion through all channels, with a focus on digital and the overall development program;
- collaborate with development team colleagues, cross-departmental teams, and external vendors to align annual plans and multi-year strategies for individual donor acquisition, retention, cultivation, solicitation, stewardship, and upgrading;
- provide leadership and guidance to team members to expand new donor segments beyond mid-level, sustainer, workplace giving, and tribute memorial programs;
- lead the development of an annual expense budget, including scenario planning against variables impacting expenses, unrestricted revenue generation, and lead reforecasting;
- engage with and lead one or more direct reports as they work with agency partners to enhance strategic collaboration, operational effectiveness and efficiency, and resource management;
- collaborate closely with the Vice President of Advancement and Assistant Vice President, Principal Gifts to optimize spend across marketing and advertising channels to maximize return on investment and achieve fundraising targets;

- ensure consistency of voice, brand, and fundraising offers across omni channel direct response impacts;
- collaborate with development and alumni team leaders to drive integrated strategic planning efforts related to front-facing engagement with direct response donors in an omni channel environment including mail, web, phone, mobile phone text, paid search, and social advertising;
- manage the student call center;
- collaborate with cross-departmental and cross-organizational teams to define and drive an integrated and seamless donor journey; and
- work closely with the Vice President, Assistant Vice President, Principal Gifts, and Assistant Vice President, Alumni Relations, their teams, other departmental leaders, and external vendors to establish processes and systems that support a cross-team approach to pipeline development and donor moves management including mid-level program success.

LEADERSHIP

Kimberly M. Cole

Vice President of Advancement

Executive Director, The University of Akron Foundation

In her role as Vice President of Development for UA and Executive Director of Akron Foundation, Kimberly M. Cole oversees all central fundraising staff, partners with the university's academic leaders, and provides leadership on several local volunteer boards, collaborating with key community volunteers to increase support for UA.

Her work encompasses all aspects of fundraising, including the development and management of campaigns; solicitations via major gifts, the Center for Gift and Estate Planning; the annual fund; and the reporting and recording of all gifts to UA and the foundation. Her work with the foundation includes overseeing its endowed investments, working closely with its Board of Directors, and stewarding gifts to ensure donor wishes are honored.

Additionally, Cole oversees all staff members in the Office of Alumni Relations. They, together with members of the Department of Development, support the needs of the university while engaging alumni and other stakeholders in the mission of UA.

Cole, who joined UA in 1997, is an alumna who earned a master's degree in public administration and a bachelor's degree in psychology at The University of Akron.

William Cole

Assistant Vice President, Principal Gifts

William Cole joined The University of Akron in March of 2011 where he is responsible for leading the frontline development operation for the Advancement Division including the Senior Director of Annual Giving.

With over 25 years of experience, most recently as the CEO of the Cleveland Opera Company, Cole has lead development and marketing programs in several cultural institutions along the east coast. He focuses on philanthropic opportunities that present growth results for the university that allows donors to be part of the experience shaping the future for one of the country's leading urban research universities.

Having lived in the Buckeye state since 2004, Cole is a native of North Carolina. His love of all things education and culture are shaped by his time at Catawba College and American University.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

The University of Akron seeks a Senior Director of Annual Giving with

- a commitment to the mission of The University of Akron—to develop enlightened members of society through the pursuit of excellence in undergraduate education and distinction in selected areas of graduate instruction, inquiry, and creative activity;
- experience building and growing a large and complex donor omni channel direct response/annual giving program including working with multiple vendors and leveraging external marketing efforts to deliver on key KPIs;
- deep knowledge of lead generation channels and tactics and revenue channels, including direct response, digital giving, and peer-to-peer fundraising;
- experience in direct marketing, digital commerce, and e-commerce including revenue responsibility;
- experience planning, executing, measuring, and optimizing multichannel direct response marketing campaigns and leveraging data-driven campaign targeting across diverse and complex audiences;
- experience in forecasting revenue and expenses, budgeting, and budget management including knowledge of best practices in campaign performance measurement and reporting;
- a process-oriented approach, with an ability to transform vision and theory into well-defined goals, strategies, plans, and action steps;
- initiative and passion for taking on new projects and a desire to embrace solution-forward thinking, seeing challenges as opportunities;
- excellent written and oral communication skills and a talent for building positive relationships with donors, volunteers, and colleagues;
- adaptability and flexibility in fast-paced environment and an ability to multi-task and successfully manage multiple priorities simultaneously; and
- proficiency in MS Office, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and development databases (Raisers Edge/NXT).

The University of Akron will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. A bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience and at least five years of experience managing a complex direct response program that includes mid-level and sustainer programs is preferred.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$90,000 to \$95,000 annually. The University of Akron offers a [comprehensive package of employee benefits](#).

LOCATION

The University of Akron is in Akron, Ohio. This position may be performed remotely.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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

To apply for this position, visit:

[Senior Director of Annual Giving, The University of Akron.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Tom Herbert, tomherbert@aspenleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.