



SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI AND GIFT SUCCESS

AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Auburn, Alabama



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Auburn University in the search for a Senior Director of Alumni and Gift Success.

The Senior Director of Alumni and Gift Success will provide both university-wide and departmental leadership by partnering with advancement colleagues and university departments to offer life-time value to Auburn graduates and supporters through university-level awards, interest-based programs, and personalized engagement. The Senior Director will drive meaningful engagement, enhance the experience, deliver value, foster success, and promote life-long affiliation and ownership with alumni, parents, donors, friends, and fans of Auburn.

Compelled by its mission—to be dedicated to improving the lives of the people of Alabama, the nation, and the world through forward-thinking education, life-enhancing research and scholarship, and selfless service—Auburn University has prepared and inspired a new generation of students. Igniting talent, challenging in ways never thought possible, and providing the tools needed to be the difference makers in their professions, their communities, and beyond is the hallmark of the university's vision and 160-year history. Auburn University was chartered in 1856 and opened its doors in 1859 as a private liberal arts institution. In 1872, under the Morrill Act, the school became the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Alabama—the first land-grant college in the South. In 1960, the name of the school was changed to Auburn University, a title more in keeping with its location, and expressing the varied academic programs and larger curriculum of a major university.

Auburn University today is a comprehensive land, sea, and space grant institution—among the few that hold that distinction—occupying more than 1,840 acres and helping fulfill the dreams of over 31,000 students. The university maintains very high levels of research activity as an R1 institution and high standards for teaching excellence—organized into 15 academic colleges and schools, offering more than 150 undergraduate degrees, and over 550 student organizations. Auburn University boasts a long list of rankings and accomplishments—rankings in the Top 50 among public universities by *U.S. News and World Report*, to the Best Value College by *The Princeton Review*, and to even holding the distinction of being the top university for the Happiest students by *The Princeton Review*, to name a few.

Auburn University's core traditions are passion and spirit rooted in *The Auburn University Creed*, written in 1943 by George Petrie, Professor and Administrator. It is one of the first true traditions for the university, instilling the importance of hard work, knowledge, and being a genuinely good person. The "Auburn Family" is a closely connected community of over 250,000 that also ranks among the 50 most powerful alumni networks in the world.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Senior Director of Alumni and Gift Success will report to the Vice President of Engagement and Executive Director of the Auburn Alumni Association, Gretchen VanValkenburg. The Senior Director will serve as a member of the Engagement leadership Team and will oversee a team of approximately five staff.

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

As a land-grant institution, Auburn University is dedicated to improving the lives of the people of Alabama, the nation, and the world through forward-thinking education, life-enhancing research and scholarship, and selfless service. Its vision is to lead and shape the future of higher education.

It is an exciting time to join Auburn Advancement which includes Advancement Services, Talent and Culture, Engagement, Philanthropy, and Communication. Led by Senior Vice President John Morris, an energetic, experienced, and respected advancement leader, this newly formed organization has a vision to lead and shape the future of advancement. It will embrace purpose, collaboration, innovation, and production as core values.

Auburn Advancement is committed to a culture that fosters mutual respect, inclusion, accountability, and professional development. It offers a modern work environment where employees are trusted to realize their full potential and earn their pinnacle career experience.

–Gretchen VanValkenburg

Vice President of Engagement and Executive Director of the Auburn Alumni Association

AUBURN UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice are important values at Auburn University. Auburn University works to eliminate barriers facing underrepresented community members and commits to sustaining and supporting diversity in all its forms including those based on life experience, gender, sex, nationality, race, identity, ethnicity, age, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, disability, neurodiversity, and religion. Auburn actively cultivates a community where all members are valued, respected, and can thrive personally and professionally. Auburn invests resources to increase the number of underrepresented groups in all facets of the university including staff, students, faculty, vendors, partners, and those who offer voluntary service. Auburn measures its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice through ongoing assessment and evaluation of activities and individual and collective actions as reflected in practices, procedures, programs, relationships, behaviors, and campus culture.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Director of Alumni and Gift Success will

- provide leadership, direction, and support of alumni and gift success programs to create highly productive engagement among stakeholders;

- oversee the affinity-based programs that focus on diverse interests of alumni and support the established volunteer councils and related committees to offer high quality and meaningful experiences for stakeholders;
- create and foster effective early engagement opportunities uniquely designed to connect students and alumni;
- provide leadership and direction for Auburn Alumni Association awards programs that recognize and amplify the accomplishments of alumni, faculty, and friends; and
- serve as staff liaison for Auburn Alumni Association's related committees and support the Executive Director with the identification, training, and engagement of Board directors.

LEADERSHIP

Gretchen VanValkenburg

Vice President of Engagement and Executive Director, Auburn Alumni Association

Gretchen VanValkenburg serves as Vice President of Engagement and Executive Director, Auburn Alumni Association for Auburn University. She is responsible for providing strategic leadership, direction, and support of the mission of the Auburn Alumni Association and Auburn University.

VanValkenburg, a 1986 Auburn business graduate, has a distinguished career as a university advancement professional. Prior to returning to Auburn, she served as Executive Director of Development and Alumni Engagement at the University of West Florida, where she provided direction for all development and alumni-related activities and operations. Over a 17-year period, she held various leadership positions with increasing areas of responsibility, including alumni event planning, alumni board management, donor relations, fiscal management, volunteer recruitment, and public speaking. She also served as a major gifts officer and led capital campaign planning efforts. VanValkenburg is a native of Montevallo and attended the University of Montevallo from 1982-1984.

VanValkenburg and her husband are life members of the Auburn Alumni Association and the Circle of Excellence Society.

Regenia R. Sanders

President, Auburn Alumni Associations

Regenia Sanders is a Principal at Ernst & Young LLP (EY) and serves as the America's Supply Chain Leader for the Advanced Manufacturing & Mobility Industry Market, as well as Supply Chain Planning leader at EY. She has 20 years of experience delivering supply chain assessment and transformational projects, from sourcing and procurement to planning and fulfillment for Fortune 500 and Private Equity portfolio companies.

The majority of her experience is in Industrial Manufacturing, where she advises and helps clients to innovate their supply chains. Sanders finds efficiencies through process improvement, while leveraging analytics and advanced technology point supply chain solutions and has authored thought leadership in the area. At Auburn, Sanders is a member of the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering's Alumni Council and serves on the steering committee for the EMERGE Leadership program recently launched by Student Affairs.

She is engaged in efforts with the Office of Inclusion & Diversity at Auburn and funds an endowed scholarship for females pursuing their undergraduate degrees in engineering. Sanders is also a member of the George Petrie Society, a recent inductee into the Samford Society, and a member of the Circle of Excellence Society. Sanders was awarded Distinguished Auburn Engineer from the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering in 2021.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Auburn University seeks a Senior Director of Alumni and Gift Success with

- a commitment to the mission of the Auburn Alumni Association—to advance Auburn University by engaging all alumni and promoting a more inclusive membership program;
- an understanding of higher education policies and procedures;
- knowledge of alumni relations, student affairs, annual giving, and development procedures;
- an ability to set and implement strategic goals;
- knowledge of best practices for advancement related engagement and gift success programs;
- an understanding of best practices for working with awards programs and affinity-based programs that focus on early engagement;
- an ability to maintain effective interpersonal relationships;
- an ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written form;
- knowledge of budget control methods, policies, and procedures; and
- experience with CRM or donor management software.

A bachelor's degree is required for this position as is at least eight years of experience in planning and implementing alumni and advancement events and programs with at least two years of experience directly supervising full-time employees.

SALARY & BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$90,000 to \$135,000 annually. Auburn University offers a comprehensive [benefits package](#).

LOCATION

This position is located in Auburn, Alabama, a friendly university town in the rolling hills of east central Alabama, with a population of approximately 60,000. It is conveniently located along Interstate 85, less than 60 miles northeast of Alabama's capital city of Montgomery; about 30 miles northwest of Columbus, Georgia; and 100 miles southwest of Atlanta. Alabama's Gulf Shores can be reached in less than four hours. Auburn residents overwhelmingly rate the city as a great place to live, work, and raise children. *Forbes* consistently has ranked Auburn on its lists for Best Places to Retire and Best Small Places for Business and Careers. Auburn City Schools consistently have been ranked among the top public-school systems in the state and nation.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to Auburn University's mission as well as the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin April 30 and will continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

AUBURN UNIVERSITY IS AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER. It is Auburn's policy to provide equal employment opportunities for all individuals without regard to race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other classification protected by applicable law.

To apply for this position, visit:

[Senior Director of Alumni and Gift Success, Auburn University.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Felicia Garcia-Hartstein:

[feliciaqh@aspenleadershipgroup.com.](mailto:feliciaqh@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

All inquiries will be held in confidence.