



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MAJOR GIFTS**  
**BUENA VISTA UNIVERSITY**  
**Storm Lake, Iowa**  
[Buena Vista University](#)



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Buena Vista University in the search for an Executive Director of Major Gifts.

The Executive Director of Major Gifts will lead the front-line team of major gift officers enabling them to reach their fullest potential in securing philanthropic investment in support of Buena Vista University. The Executive Director will be a results-driven development manager and a major gifts fundraiser with demonstrated success in metrics-based fundraising. The Executive Director will also manage a personal portfolio of qualified major gift prospects and lead by example in cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of their prospects.

Buena Vista University is an independent, regionally accredited university offering a blended professional and liberal arts curriculum. BVU serves a predominantly Midwest audience with a focus on Iowa and the surrounding states. The university's main campus is located in picturesque Storm Lake, a diverse, vibrant, and professional community of 11,000 situated in the heartland of northwest Iowa and part of the beautiful Iowa Lakes region.

Buena Vista University has a total enrollment of 1,847, serving students on its Storm Lake campus, Centers on community college campuses, and online and in select graduate programs. Based on a survey with a response rate of over 94 percent, 99 percent of the Class of 2019 was employed, in graduate school or otherwise satisfied with their career status within six months of graduation. In the past 40 years, more than 16,000 students have received bachelor's degrees from BVU sites located on community college campuses. One hundred percent of full-time Storm Lake campus students who applied for financial assistance last year received it. Each year, BVU provides approximately \$14 million in student financial assistance out of its operating budget.

BVU prepares students for lifelong success through transformational academic, professional, and co-curricular programs. The university's ability to preserve, as well as enhance, its traditions by articulating a riveting vision for the future is shared by faculty, staff, students, and leadership.

Since its founding as Buena Vista College by the Presbyterian Church in 1891, the institution has been dedicated to teaching, education, and service. The values set forth by its founders endure as a lasting foundation.

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director of Major Gifts will report to the Vice President for University Development and Alumni Engagement, Gary L. Klein and will oversee a team of two newly created major gifts officer positions.

## PRINCIPAL OPPORTUNITIES

*Buena Vista University is seeking a thoughtful servant leader who is genuine in developing personal relationships, knowledgeable about current best practices in advancement, and enthusiastic about BVU's mission, vision, people, and programming to partner with Interim President Brian Lenzmeier and senior leadership in launching the institution's next comprehensive campaign aligned with [Buena Vista University's new strategic plan](#).*

*BVU's fundraising success is significant and goes back 40 years from receiving \$18 million in 1980 – at the time the largest gift per student in the history of higher education in the United States – to most recently receiving the 2019 CASE Educational Fundraising Award. Through strategic investment strategies and the generosity of its benefactors, BVU has built an endowment valued at approximately \$138 million.*

*As a key member of the office of University Development and Alumni Engagement, the Executive Director of Major Gifts will work alongside a talented team of 16 professionals responsible for Alumni Engagement, Annual Giving, Advancement Operations, Foundations and Corporate Relations, Comprehensive Campaigns, Major and Planned Giving, and the Philanthropic Experience.*

–Gary L. Klein, Vice President for University Development and Alumni Engagement

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director of Major Gifts will

- in close partnership with the Vice President for University Development and Alumni Engagement, provide day-to-day fundraising leadership for the major gifts team;
- serve as an experienced major gifts officer and assume direct management of the university's major gift fundraising activity;
- meet explicit performance objectives including the completion of 150 personal face-to-face visits per year, of meaningful, strategic, personal interactions with assigned prospects (approximately 15 each month);
- manage a major gift portfolio of prospects including identification, qualification, cultivation, and solicitation of major outright and planned gifts and travel as needed in fulfillment of these duties;
- coordinate cultivation activities and solicitations with other university representatives, as appropriate, including the President, senior staff, advancement professionals, key faculty, and volunteers;
- maintain strategic cultivation plans for a focused group of assigned prospects who are scheduled for solicitation within the coming 12-18 month period including plans that project gift amount, area of benefactor passion to support, as well as a step by step plan for cultivation with a cultivation schedule; and
- provide timely, written reports regarding the outcome of cultivation and solicitation actions in the form of contact reports, stage updates, and strategy statement updates and revisions within Raisers Edge NXT.

## KEY COLLEAGUES



**Dr. Brian Lenzmeier**  
**Interim President**

Dr. Brian Lenzmeier joined BVU in 2003 as a professor of biology.

Lenzmeier earned his Ph.D. in biochemistry from Colorado State University and holds a Bachelor of Arts in biology from Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. He also completed post-doctoral research in molecular biology at Princeton University and was a visiting research fellow in the area of molecular medicine at Mayo Clinic in 2011.

In addition to his role as a professor of biology, Lenzmeier has held several leadership roles at BVU. In recent years, he has served as chair of the Tenure and promotion committee, played an integral role in the revision of faculty employment policies, and worked with colleagues to develop and implement a new biomedical sciences major.

Lenzmeier has been named "Faculty Member of the Year" twice by the BVU student senate, and was the 2009 recipient of the George Wythe Award, the University's highest honor for excellence in teaching.



**Gary L. Klein, CFRE**  
**Vice President University Development and Alumni Engagement**

Gary Klein joined Buena Vista University as Vice President for University Development and Alumni Engagement in August 2019.

Klein, a proven leader in institutional advancement and development, has devoted his career to higher education. Before coming to BVU, Klein served as Vice President for Institutional Advancement at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin. He previously served as Vice President for Institutional Advancement at Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wisconsin, from 2002 to 2015, and held a variety of advancement and development positions from 1996 through 2001 at St. Mary's University in Winona, Minnesota.

Early in his career, Klein served the Registrar's Office at Mount Marty College in Yankton, South Dakota and the Admissions Department at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion.

Klein, who was raised on a farm near Granville, is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE), a member of the National Committee on Planned Giving (NCPG), and has served the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) for 22 years. Klein, who earned a master's degree in philanthropy and development at St. Mary's University in Winona, majored in elementary education as an undergraduate at the University of South Dakota.



**Zach Rus**  
**Assistant Vice President of University Development and Alumni Engagement**

Zach Rus' career in fundraising and constituent engagement includes benefactor engagement strategy, board recruitment and development, campaign planning, annual giving planning and execution, donor segmentation, and volunteer leadership development. His commitment to achieving goals through intentional relationship-building is what defines his work style.

Prior to joining Buena Vista University, Rus served the University of Chicago during the announcement of the university's \$4.5 billion capital campaign – which

included the charge to increase alumni engagement by 50%. Rus was responsible for benefactor and alumni relations in Chicago and the Midwest. He was personally responsible for increasing the University of Chicago Chicagoland alumni Board of Directors from 12 to 25 members. The growth in volunteer recruitment led to a three-fold increase in event engagement.

During his career, Rus has managed individual giving and alumni engagement programs for the Illinois Institute of Technology and led leadership development programs for his Evanston-based fraternity. As a fundraising consultant for Pennington & Company, he served several fraternity and sorority clients on feasibility studies and capital campaigns for projects ranging from \$500,000 to \$3.5 million.

Rus has a Bachelor of Arts in Corporate Communication from Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. He is a graduate of the Development Leadership Consortium fellows' program and served on AFP Chicago's education council. Rus has been a member of CASE for 10 years and is currently a member of the Central Iowa Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.



**Suzette Radke**

**Vice President for Finance and Administration**

Suzette Radke was named Vice President for Finance and Administration in 2016. She holds a bachelor's degree in leisure services and physical education from Wartburg College, a bachelor's degree in accounting from BVU and a master's degree in professional accountancy from the University of South Dakota, Vermillion. Radke has also received a certificate in advanced education leadership from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Institute for Management and Leadership in Education.

Radke's career at BVU spans 25 years, including roles as an accountant, accounting manager and controller, and most recently director of business services and controller. Since 2012, she has served as an adjunct faculty member in BVU's Harold Walter Siebens School of Business, teaching Governmental and not-for-profit accounting.

Radke also manages the accounting for a family farm and is actively involved in the community as a member of the Baseball/Softball Improvement Commission, a Buena Vista Regional Medical Center Foundation board member, and an advisory board member for Heritage Bank NA.

**PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS**

Buena Vista University seeks an Executive Director of Major Gifts with

- a career history of commitment to the highest professional and ethical standards including confidentiality;
- a proven ability to handle multiple tasks simultaneously while giving appropriate attention to detail;
- an ability to travel extensively for business purposes;
- a proven ability to interact with varied constituencies in a collegial and professional manner;
- a proven ability to work independently as well as with staff and volunteers;
- demonstrated multicultural competence – the awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to work with others who are culturally different from oneself in meaningful, relevant, and productive ways;
- an ability and desire to support the mission of the university through work with faculty, staff, students, and alumni and friends of the university;
- experience in the preparation of performance expectations for fiscal year;

- a proven ability to complete tasks and projects in a timely and accurate manner;
- an ability to communicate the university's vision, objectives, and mission; and
- facility and proficiency with computer and development software (Raisers Edge NXT preferred).

A bachelor's degree is required for this position. Seven years of relevant experience is preferred.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

Buena Vista University is committed to fostering a safe and secure environment that celebrates personal and professional growth through cultural awareness, and to developing an environment that promotes cultural sensitivity, humility, and understanding, providing the opportunity to celebrate diversity and self identity.

Buena Vista University is an equal opportunity employer; it is committed to ensuring fair and equal treatment to all employees or applicants for employment, regardless of their race, color, religion, creed, sex, disability, age or national origin. The personnel policies of the University are designed to comply with Executive Order 11375. In addition, the University is governed by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, Title IX of the Higher Education Act of 1972, Title VII and Title VIII of the Public Health Service Act, and Iowa Code Chapter 216. BVU does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in administration of its employment and personnel policies, educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other university administered programs. All students at the University are granted equal rights, privileges, programs and activities without regard for sexual orientation.

### **SALARY & BENEFITS**

Buena Vista University offers a competitive salary and package of employee benefits designed to protect and promote their financial, physical, and emotional well-being.

### **LOCATION**

Buena Vista University is located in Storm Lake, Iowa which boasts a rich heritage and history, diverse cultures, and opportunities in which to thrive. Storm Lake is located within 2.5 hours of Des Moines and Omaha, and a little over one hour of Sioux City.

### **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Buena Vista University.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

*To apply for this position, visit:*

[\*Executive Director of Major Gifts, Buena Vista University.\*](#)

*To nominate a candidate, please contact Don Hasseltine:*

[\*donhasseltine@aspenleadershipgroup.com.\*](mailto:donhasseltine@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

*All inquiries will be held in confidence.*