

Autumn French

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SUMMARY

Associate Director level **advancement** professional with nine years of **higher education** fundraising and **alumni engagement** experience, including more than six years focused on **annual giving**. Cultivates donor relationships, closes annual fund commitments, expands participation, and builds volunteer programs that support lasting institutional connections. Leads portfolio strategy, class based outreach, student philanthropy, donor stewardship, digital fundraising, CRM administration, and campaign communications. Uses constituent data and engagement signals to prioritize thoughtful outreach, strengthen service, and improve participation. Coaches volunteers, partners with alumni relations and campus teams, and translates fundraising trends into practical engagement efforts. Clear writing, organized execution, and collaborative leadership support meaningful experiences for donors, alumni, students, volunteers, and advancement colleagues.

EXPERIENCE

Associate Director, Annual Giving

August 2022 - Present

Lakeview University Foundation

Madison, WI

Direct annual giving, donor cultivation, volunteer engagement, portfolio strategy, and advancement operations for a university foundation. Partner with campus stakeholders, guide engagement planning, and translate constituent data into organized outreach and stewardship.

- Directed **annual giving** strategy and donor cultivation plans for **institutional priorities** and annual fund growth.
- Built repeatable volunteer engagement practices with clear training, coaching, stewardship, and recognition steps.
- Used CRM records and **engagement** signals to prioritize prospects, solicit commitments, and follow up on **pledges**.
- Partnered with alumni and campus teams on student **philanthropy** programs that encourage **lifelong participation**.
- Created documentation and controls that improved consistency, team learning, privacy, and service quality.
- Analyzed usage patterns and stakeholder feedback, then prioritized corrective actions for smoother delivery.

Assistant Director, Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving

June 2019 - July 2022

Riverton College

Des Moines, IA

Managed alumni engagement, CRM portfolio operations, digital fundraising, and annual giving communications for a college advancement program. Coordinated volunteers and campus partners while connecting constituent service with participation and donor stewardship goals.

- Directed **alumni engagement** and digital fundraising initiatives across targeted constituent portfolios and annual campaigns.
- Managed CRM portfolio records to support prospect identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship follow up.
- Coached **peer outreach volunteers** through practical training, timely communication, and recognition efforts.
- Partnered with campus stakeholders on **student programs** connecting participation with lifelong philanthropy.
- Translated **fundraising practices** into campaign communications, **cultivation opportunities**, and coordinated outreach plans.
- Documented workflows and reviewed usage patterns to improve quality, consistency, and stakeholder confidence.

Annual Giving Officer

September 2017 - May 2019

Prairie State University Advancement

Ames, IA

Supported annual fund solicitation, alumni stewardship, constituent service, and advancement communications within a university development operation. Applied organized portfolio management and collaborative planning to strengthen donor relationships and participation.

- Executed annual fund solicitation plans supporting **institutional priorities**, donor cultivation, and participation goals.
- Stewarded alumni through timely **communications**, thoughtful follow up, and coordinated **constituent service**.
- Maintained donor database records for prospect pipelines, **written commitments**, pledges, and engagement history.
- Supported volunteer outreach with training materials, scheduling, coaching, and recognition communications.
- Collaborated with campus partners on student philanthropy activities and alumni participation initiatives.
- Reviewed campaign activity and stakeholder feedback to recommend practical process improvements.

PROJECTS

Student Philanthropy Participation Initiative 📅 May 2022

Built a coordinated student philanthropy initiative with alumni engagement partners, connecting student participation, donor education, and long term institutional relationships.

Digital Annual Giving Campaign 📅 November 2020

Planned targeted digital fundraising communications that linked constituent data, campaign messages, donor stewardship, and annual giving participation.

LEADERSHIP & AWARDS

- CASE District V Emerging Advancement Professional Recognition, 2021

- Annual Giving Volunteer Engagement Recognition, 2023

EDUCATION

Bachelor's Degree in Communication
University of Northern Iowa GPA: 3.5
Coursework: Persuasive communication, nonprofit leadership, public relations, organizational communication

2017
Cedar Falls, IA

CERTIFICATIONS

- Certified Fund Raising Executive, CFRE 📅 2024
- CASE Advancement Professional Development Certificate 📅 2023

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Donor Databases:** Alumni records, Constituent histories, Gift records
- **CRM Systems:** Portfolio management, Prospect tracking, Stewardship records
- **Digital Fundraising:** Email campaigns, Online giving, Digital appeals
- **Annual Giving:** Annual funds, Participation campaigns, Pledge follow up
- **Volunteer Management:** Recruitment, Training, Recognition
- **Donor Relations:** Cultivation, Solicitation, Stewardship
- **Campaign Communications:** Appeal writing, Segment messaging, Follow up
- **Student Philanthropy:** Student programs, Donor education, Participation
- **Prospect Development:** Prospect identification, Pipeline building, Constituent research
- **Higher Education Advancement:** Alumni relations, Campus partnerships, Institutional priorities

SKILLS

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|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Annual giving | • Volunteer management | • Prospect pipelines | • Campaign communications |
| • Alumni engagement | • Donor stewardship | • Student philanthropy | • Higher education advancement |
| • Donor cultivation | • CRM systems | • Fundraising strategy | • Portfolio management |
| • Gift solicitation | • Digital fundraising | • Constituent service | |

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Volunteer Mentor, Advancement Professionals Peer Network, 2023 - Present
- Council for Advancement and Support of Education, Professional Member, 2019 - Present

LANGUAGES

- English (Native)
- Spanish (Intermediate)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Work Status : Authorized to work in United States. No sponsorship required.

REFERENCES

AVAILABLE ON REQUEST