



SENIOR DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT FOR THE COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS
[MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY](#)
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN STATE

U N I V E R S I T Y

Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Michigan State University in the search for a Senior Director of Development for the College of Arts & Letters.

The Senior Director of Development will be instrumental in helping the College of Arts & Letters achieve its ambitious campaign goals by identifying, cultivating, and soliciting individuals for six- and seven-figure support as well as periodic special purpose appeals and programs with business, industry, and foundations. The Senior Director will be an exceptional fundraiser, an accomplished motivator and mentor, an effective manager of people, and a visionary change agent who has a proven track record in successfully implementing comprehensive development programs. Serving as the college's chief development officer, the Senior Director will maintain a personal prospect portfolio of major donor prospects as well as employ a strategic moves management program to ensure constant positive movement along the development pipeline. As MSU strategically positions itself through its second billion-dollar plus campaign, the Senior Director will assume a leadership role in planning and spearheading the campaign effort for the College of Arts & Letters including recruiting and training volunteers, articulating the case for support, identifying and cultivating prospects, developing and reviewing proposals, and actively soliciting contributions with a focus on gifts of \$100,000 and more.

Michigan State University was established in 1855, and by 1862 it stood as the nation's premier land-grant university. Over the decades, the university has continued to be a model of what a land-grant university can and should do. As a university of, for, and by the people, Michigan State University began a long tradition of empowering people through educational opportunity. Every day, Spartans work to solve the most pressing global challenges while providing life-changing opportunities to a diverse and inclusive academic community. Located in East Lansing, three miles east of Michigan's capitol in Lansing, MSU's campus is one of the biggest and greenest in the nation. The 5,000-acre campus is home to more than 51,000 students. Top-ranked programs, high-quality opportunities, and a diverse, inclusive, and collaborative community enable those students to create personalized paths that prepare them to succeed and lead. MSU offers more than 400 academic programs and over 300 education abroad programs. It has an outstanding record of students earning Rhodes, Goldwater, and other prestigious national and international scholarships. Wherever one goes, there are Spartans working to make a better world. The MSU community includes more than 12,000 faculty and academic support staff and an alumni network nearly half a million strong.

MSU's rising research funding, nationally recognized faculty and programs, and innovative research facilities push the boundaries of discovery and yield solutions that make daily life better. MSU applies its vast knowledge and resources to create solutions in partnership with communities across the state and helps make Michigan a place of opportunity, economic growth, and innovation. Spartans work together as part of a vibrant global campus community, creating partnerships around the world, and making a lasting impact from East Lansing to East Africa. Everyday Spartans of all abilities demonstrate athleticism, leadership, commitment, and teamwork in varsity, adaptive, and club and intramural sports.

Michigan State University has been advancing the common good with uncommon will for more than 165 years. A top global university, MSU pushes the boundaries of discovery to make a better world while providing students with life-changing opportunities. The university is ranked in the top 10 nationally by *U.S. News & World Report* for learning communities, study abroad, and service-learning offerings. MSU also has 35 undergraduate and graduate programs and concentrations ranked in the top 25 nationally by the publication, including six top ranked programs—undergraduate and graduate programs in supply chain management and logistics, graduate programs in elementary and secondary education, as well as both online and on campus graduate programs in curriculum and instruction. The university also has been named a gold-status veteran-friendly school by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency eight years in a row and received a gold rating for sustainability achievements in 2022 through the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

THE COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS

Michigan State University's College of Arts & Letters educates actors, artists, designers, educators, filmmakers, linguists, philosophers, researchers, translators, writers, entrepreneurs, and many more in a creative, learning, and nurturing environment. Students who come to the college with experience in their chosen field find the additional knowledge and personal space to further learn their craft and hone their skills. Those who have yet to identify their future life's work are met with diverse opportunities for creative reflection to explore the world and find their passion.

Beyond traditional coursework, the College of Arts & Letters provides student and faculty collaboration, interdisciplinary course offerings in the arts and humanities, and opportunities to engage the greater MSU community as well as those outside of campus. In these ways, the college strives to nurture and produce artists, designers, teachers, and writers whose work truly matters as they help build the body of work and shape the future of their chosen professions.

The college employs some of the most engaged, talented, and forward-thinking faculty and scholars in the country to educate its students and bring public focus to the arts and humanities as the threads that weave together numerous shared cultures and traditions. The College of Arts & Letters not only wants its graduates to succeed; it wants and expects them to excel in their chosen fields.

These are shared goals with faculty, students, and graduates, many of whom have made—and continue to make—their marks on their professions and on the world. In fact, this may well be the college's greatest strength: the joint belief that through one's life's work, solutions to the world's most difficult problems can be found.

The breadth and depth of that work being carried out on campus and in the community is incredible and at times, breathtaking. Young minds and formidable talent unleash new directions and challenge conventions in art, design, digital media, language, literature, teaching, theatre, thought, writing, and more that transcend disciplines and cultures. This is the life essence of Michigan State University's College of Arts & Letters.

This is why the college continues developing and expanding a creative and collaborative environment where students, faculty, scholars, and accomplished professionals can brave new worlds and old problems together, collapsing local, regional, national, and global issues into an understanding that all is global, and sets up patterns and expectations for College of Arts & Letters graduates that will serve them well, regardless of their profession, as they work to cast, recast, shape, and reshape the arts and humanities.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Senior Director of Development for the College of Arts & Letters will report jointly to the Interim Dean of the College of Arts & Letters, Dr. Yen-Hwei Lin and the Senior Executive Director of Constituency Programs, Sarah K. Blom. The Senior Director will serve on the Dean's leadership team and will oversee a team of two full-time development officers, one events/alumni relations professional, and one administrative support staff position.

FROM THE INTERIM DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS AND SENIOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CONSTITUENCY PROGRAMS

The College of Arts & Letters at Michigan State University is proud to be a national and international leader in 21st-century arts and humanities academic education, research, and community outreach and aspires to continue to innovate and expand on this transformational path. This ambition requires resources to attract, recruit, support, and retain the best, most ground-breaking, and most diverse faculty, graduate, and undergraduate students. Faculty research and creative activities, inclusive teaching excellence, and enriching student experiences are at the heart of a leading-edge arts and humanities education. Our approach is grounded in a culture of care and a commitment to equity and inclusion. The enduring strengths of the liberal arts—excellent intercultural communication, critical thinking, ethical imagination, and global engagement—combined with new and emerging scholarship committed to digital fluency, civic leadership, and public engagement, deepen our understanding of the world and address the most complex challenges of our time.

The College of Arts & Letters is excited to announce an exceptional professional opportunity for a Senior Director of Development to lead our advancement efforts, further engage our connected community of Spartans, and inspire philanthropic investments that support institutional goals in meaningful ways.

As one of three core colleges at Michigan State University, the College of Arts & Letters houses nine departments and 390 faculty and academic staff and boasts over 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students. We offer 25 majors, 40 minors, 15 MA/MFA, and nine PhD programs that provide an irresistible intellectual and creative educational experience for a meaningful life and career development. Our world-class faculty and cutting-edge technology enable students to expand their accomplishments and experiences to realize their dreams. The college ranks #1 in education abroad with over 75 programs in 40 countries on six continents. We have a vast community of nearly 35,000 living alumni working in all facets of the public and private sectors.

The Senior Director of Development for the College of Arts & Letters will lead an advancement team in furthering the college's core values of equity, openness, and community with a commitment to practicing inclusion as a matter of institutional habit. The Senior Director will be a thought leader and member of the Dean's leadership team within the college. As Michigan State University is in the planning phase for our next multi-billion-dollar comprehensive campaign, the Senior Director will actively partner with the college's leadership to envision specific priorities informed by the MSU and College's Strategic Plans 2030 and develop a compelling narrative and implement a strategic plan for success.

We invite you to learn more about this exciting opportunity at the College of Arts & Letters. Thank you for your interest.

Dr. Yen-Hwei Lin, Interim Dean, College of Arts & Letters
Sarah K. Blom, Senior Executive Director of Constituency Programs, University Advancement

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Michigan State University is recognized as a national leader in the advancement of knowledge by the most diverse and exemplary cadre of students, trainees, faculty, staff, and alumni who transform lives through equitable teaching, research, scholarship, and practice. Michigan State University believes differences are assets. It fosters a community that respects and values a broad range of backgrounds, viewpoints, and experiences and encourages and creates opportunities so all Spartans can reach their full potential educationally and professionally.

MSU has always been a forerunner and innovator, leading the way for other institutions to follow. From acknowledging the ancestral and contemporary lands of Native Americans that it occupies to its early practice of educating and hiring underrepresented minorities and women.

MSU established the Office for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion (IDI), led by Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Jabbar R. Bennett, Ph.D., to advance MSU's diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic priorities in partnership with and in support of executive and administrative leaders, faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

It has established the core values of collaboration, camaraderie, courage, commitment, and growth, based on the belief that inclusion happens only when the whole campus and community see it as their responsibility, and that true excellence cannot be achieved without inclusion. IDI has advanced university-wide initiatives with campus partners to become a national leader in increasing diversity, promoting inclusion, ensuring equity, and eliminating disparities on the MSU campus and beyond.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Fundraising

The Senior Director of Development for the College of Arts & Letters will

- plan and implement methods of prospect identification, cultivation, and solicitation in order to maximize fundraising support, and match donor's interest with the needs of the college;
- manage a portfolio of approximately 70 to 100 major gift prospects, strive to conduct 15 to 20 significant personal visits per month, which will include discovery visits to qualify new prospects, and deliver two to four proposals per month;
- plan and implement the major and planned gifts program for the college as well as funding from other sources, including corporations and foundations; and
- provide assistance to donors regarding tax laws, policies, and procedures and resolves problems in order to maintain a positive image of the university.

Personnel Management

The Senior Director of Development for the College of Arts & Letters will

- supervise, direct, motivate, and evaluate staff in order to assure consistency in quantity and quality of work performed;
- set clear direction and priorities for professional and administrative support personnel;
- promote excellence through well-defined and measurable goals;
- inspire and motivate staff through the free flow of information placing staff members' work within the context of the college's strategic priorities as well as within the mission of the university;
- lead by example; foster a work environment that recognizes and rewards cross functional collaboration and team-based efforts; and celebrate current achievements and set clear expectations for future success;

- actively mentor and train staff, providing frequent opportunities for professional learning and growth;
- emphasize retention as a means of increasing capacity and expertise of the team;
- fully leverage human and financial resources and promote greater efficiency;
- provide the structure and guidance necessary to promote a high-performance culture that meets the needs and expectations of a successful and diverse alumni community; and
- recruit, train, motivate, and evaluate volunteers in order to accomplish college goals and objectives.

Programmatic Management

The Senior Director of Development for the College of Arts & Letters will

- supervise and coordinate with external relations staff, including development, alumni, public relations, and communications, in order to ensure coordination of information to alumni and friends of the college;
- audit internal operations in order to develop standardized procedures and to ensure conformity with established policy;
- assist in setting both long- and short-term goals and plans in order to determine resources required;
- plan, host, and communicate at meetings of the public and university personnel in order to provide information on the college and university;
- assist in budget preparation in order to ensure consistency with departmental goals; and
- coordinate the composing, editing, and publishing of college literature in order to provide staff and volunteers with campaign progress reports.

LEADERSHIP

Dr. Yen-Hwei Lin

Interim Dean, College of Arts & Letters

Dr. Yen-Hwie Lin assumed the role of Interim Dean of Michigan State University's College of Arts & Letters, effective June 10, 2024.

A professor of linguistics, Lin has chaired the Department of Linguistics, Languages, and Cultures in the College of Arts & Letters since 2018. In the chairperson role, Lin has been responsible for overseeing the academic operation of the department; long-range and strategic planning for the development of departmental programs; preparing and administering the budget; faculty and staff recruitment and annual reviews; and supervising course schedule preparations and teaching assignments. She has served in additional administrative roles within the department, including Department Coordinator, Associate Chair, Director of Graduate Studies for Linguistics, and Coordinator of the Chinese program. She was also a Big Ten Academic Alliance, or BTAA, Academic Leadership Program Fellow, a BTAA Department Executive Officer Program member, and a Lilly Teaching Fellow.

Lin earned her doctorate in linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin and came to Michigan State University in 1989. Her research focuses on phonological theory and phonological patterns in Chinese languages, with additional interests in phonetics, sociolinguistics, and cognitive science. She has been co-director of the Phonology-Phonetics Research Group and Experimental Lab in the Department of Linguistics, Languages and Cultures; core faculty of MSU's Cognitive Science Program; affiliated faculty of the Second Language Studies Program; and a core faculty member of MSU's Asian Studies Center.

As an established scholar in Chinese linguistics nationally and internationally, Lin currently serves as Co-editor of *Lingua Sinica*, Associate Editor of *Language and Linguistics* and is on the editorial board of the *Journal of East Asian Linguistics*. Since 2017, she has been a member of the advisory board of the Institute of Linguistics at Academia Sinica in Taiwan. She has published widely in journals and book volumes and is the author of “The Sounds of Chinese” (Cambridge University Press, 2007) and co-editor of “The Cambridge Handbook of Chinese Linguistics” (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

Sarah K. Blom

Senior Executive Director of Constituency Programs

Sarah K. Blom is a seasoned professional in development and alumni relations, boasting over three decades of experience. Currently serving as the Senior Executive Director of Constituency Programs, Blom leads the advancement strategies for twelve colleges and units at Michigan State University, focusing on the cultural arts and humanities. She oversees the fundraising and engagement efforts of these constituency units, including the College of Arts & Letters.

Prior to her current role, Blom held the position of Senior Executive Director of Individual Giving at MSU. In this capacity, she directed central and regionally focused advancement efforts for her alma mater. Her responsibilities included overseeing regional major gifts, gift planning, special constituencies, and international advancement. Blom played a pivotal role in enhancing diversity and inclusion efforts within the fundraising team through the implementation of the development associates and UA internship programs.

During her tenure as Senior Director of Development for the College of Social Science, Blom was instrumental in leading the advancement efforts for the university's largest college constituency at MSU. She also served as the Director of Special Gifts, Associate Director of Annual Giving, and the Telemarketing Coordinator during her career at Michigan State University.

With a strong foundation in annual giving, Blom also served as Director of Annual Giving and President's Associates at California State University in Northridge. There, she developed and directed the university's individual giving program, achieving impressive increases in campaign revenue while optimizing cost efficiency.

Throughout her career, Blom has demonstrated a deep commitment to advancing the mission of higher education through effective fundraising strategies, talent development, and stakeholder engagement. Her extensive experience across various facets of development and alumni relations makes her an effective mentor and servant leader within the academic landscape.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Michigan State University seeks a Senior Director of Development for the College of Arts & Letters with

- a commitment to the mission of Michigan State University—to advance knowledge and transform lives by providing outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional education; conducting research of the highest caliber; and advancing outreach, engagement, and economic activities;
- a history of successfully implementing comprehensive development programs and serving as a strategic partner to leadership;
- a deep understanding of moves management including prospect identification, solicitation, and cultivation strategies that result in the successful solicitation of funds;
- an understanding of the planning and assessment of campaign feasibility;
- an ability to conduct needs assessments of programs, prepare case statements, identify and cultivate prospects, develop and review proposals, and actively solicit contributions;
- experience in major, principal, and planned giving as well as corporate and foundation giving;

- superior interpersonal and communication skills across platforms and constituencies;
- an ability to supervise, direct, motivate, and evaluate support staff to assure consistency, quantity, and quality;
- a desire to foster a work environment that recognizes and rewards cross functional collaboration and team-based efforts;
- an ability to recruit and train volunteers;
- experience developing budgets and analyzing operations; and
- experience facilitating major gifts through planned giving instruments and working knowledge of tax laws affecting charitable giving.

A bachelor's degree or knowledge equivalent to that which normally would be acquired by completing a four-year college degree program in Communications, Public Relations, Marketing and/or Business is preferred for this position as is at least five years of related and progressively more responsible or expansive work experience in professional and higher education fundraising, public relations, or marketing. Campaign experience is preferred. Michigan State University will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. If you are excited about this role and feel that you can contribute to MSU, but your experience does not exactly align with every qualification listed above, we encourage you to apply.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$145,000 to \$160,000 annually. Michigan State University offers a [comprehensive package of benefits](#).

LOCATION

The staff of the College of Arts & Letters currently operate in a hybrid work environment, spending two to four days in the office per week, depending on the nature of the duties and travel schedules. The Senior Director of Development will be expected to integrate into the culture of the college and spend time in person developing relationships with faculty and staff, as well as with colleagues across campus in order to effectively represent and convey the college's mission to alumni and donors.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Michigan State University as well as the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the position 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 Development for the College of Arts & Letters, Michigan State University.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Tom Herbert:

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

All inquiries will be held in confidence.