



VICE PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, D.C.



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
W A S H I N G T O N , D C

Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with American University in the search for a Vice President of University Advancement.

The Vice President of University Advancement will provide visionary and strategic leadership to the University Advancement team, driving strategic initiatives that support the mission and growth of American University. The Vice President will be an energetic, innovative, and results-driven leader who will shape staffing and budget strategies, recruit and develop top talent, and cultivate a collaborative, supportive culture within the Advancement division. As a key member of the President's Cabinet, the Vice President will work closely with the President and university leadership to advance institutional priorities, enhance philanthropic engagement, and build deep, impactful relationships with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders. The Vice President will lead efforts to secure transformational gifts, expand the university's donor base, and elevate the role of alumni relations in ensuring long-term fundraising success. By aligning development strategies with institutional goals and representing the university to key constituencies, the Vice President will play a central role in strengthening American University's national and international profile and its capacity to secure sustainable, meaningful support for its future.

ABOUT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

American University (AU) is a private, co-educational doctoral institution situated in a residential neighborhood of northwest Washington, D.C. It is a leading student-centered R2 research institution with seven highly ranked schools and colleges, small class sizes, and a reputation for creating meaningful change in the world. American University's more than 13,000 students distinguish themselves for their service, leadership, and ability to rethink global and domestic challenges and opportunities. American University combines a tradition of strong undergraduate and graduate education with a focus on experiential learning, global leadership, and public service. With over 170 programs including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, American University students choose a personalized curriculum of theoretical study and experiential learning, taught by internationally recognized faculty in courses that take them from the classroom to the nation's capital, and all around the globe.

American University was founded by John Fletcher Hurst, a respected Methodist bishop who dreamed of creating a university that trained public servants for the future. Chartered by Congress in 1893, AU has always been defined by its groundbreaking spirit. Before women could vote, they attended American University. When Washington, D.C. was still segregated, 400 African Americans called American University home. As AU continues to grow in reputation and stature, the institution remains grounded in the ideals of its founders as it continues to be a leader for a changing world with a mission to advance knowledge, foster intellectual curiosity, build community, and empower lives of purpose, service, and leadership.

Students at American University forge a path beyond the classroom with more than 200 immersive opportunities to conduct research, study abroad, intern, serve in leadership roles, and help make a tangible impact on AU, D.C., and world communities. *U.S. News & World Report* ranked AU's study abroad programs fourth in the nation, and the university 19th for internships and in the top 25 for undergraduate research. American University also ranks among the nation's great universities for scholarship and careers. It was ranked top in the nation for Boren graduate fellows and second for combined Boren scholars and fellows. AU was named fourth in the nation for Presidential Management Fellows finalists. With a campus in the heart of the nation's capital, it is no surprise that *Princeton Review* ranked AU in the top ten for having both the most active student government and most politically active students.

AU's Alumni Association engages and sustains a lifelong and worldwide community of more than 150,000 alumni around the world through opportunities for meaningful engagement aimed at increasing awareness, pride, participation, volunteer involvement, and philanthropic investment in the university. Twelve affinity groups and networks provide opportunities to connect with friends and current students. AU's alumni base, together with parents and families, is generous in its support of the university. The university is actively seeking to build its alumni network and to increase its ties to the institution and across generations.

For fiscal year 2025, American University has a balanced budget of approximately \$860 million. The university also maintains financial resources, which include several reserve contingencies to manage unanticipated enrollment revenue losses, infrastructure needs, strategic initiatives, and compensation matters. For fiscal year 2024, the university's total change in net assets without donor restrictions totaled \$55 million. This measure is based on Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and represents the total net income for the university that is not based on donor-imposed stipulations.

AU's growing endowment provides the foundation to advance the university's changemaking ethos for generations to come through its scholarships, professorships, and programmatic and operating funding. As of June 30, 2024, the endowment was valued at approximately \$1 billion. There were 640 endowed funds, which include both donor-restricted endowment funds and funds designated by the Board of Trustees to function as endowments. The endowment funds support students, faculty, research, and the programs that set AU apart. Of these funds, 410 are endowed scholarship and fellowship funds that provided \$4.58 million in student support. The university's total endowment noted a return of 10.65% during fiscal year 2024.

In September 2024, American University officially concluded its seven-year *Changemakers for a Changing World, Change Can't Wait: The Campaign for American University*, the most ambitious and successful fundraising effort in the university's history. Thanks to broad support from the AU community, the campaign surpassed its original goal, raising more than \$507 million for critical priorities including impact-driven research, student thriving, and the strengthening of community engagement. Launched as fuel to support the university's strategic plan, *Change Can't Wait* inspired record-setting annual giving and alumni engagement. More than 24,000 alumni in all 50 states and 81 countries, 9,000 faculty and staff, and 12,000 students and families contributed to the campaign. Unrestricted giving increased nearly threefold, and \$120 million has been added to the university's endowment.

As a direct result of philanthropic support, the university has invested in the student experience, creating or expanding 180 scholarships and providing more than 600 students with donor-funded scholarship support each year. *Change Can't Wait* raised \$34 million for capital projects, including the Student Thriving Complex's Meltzer Center for Athletic Performance and the renovated Mary Graydon Center. The campaign also enhanced AU's commitment to research that addresses society's complex challenges, creating nine new endowed faculty positions in areas such as sustainability, finance, neuroscience, and peace studies. Four centers and institutes were named or created during the campaign, and more than \$127 million was raised for research and faculty support.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Vice President of University Advancement will report to the President, Jonathan R. Alger and will serve on the President's Cabinet. The Vice President will oversee a team of 90 staff including seven direct reports.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

From its prime location in Washington, D.C., to its educational mission rooted in service, American University attracts the leaders, doers, and innovators of tomorrow. Known for innovative teaching at undergraduate and graduate levels and a commitment to research that makes an impact, AU combines the best of a small liberal arts university with a serious research institution on the rise. Our students, faculty, staff, and alumni share a common purpose to make the world a better place for all.

After serving as President of James Madison University for 12 years, I began my AU journey this summer and have since been invigorated and inspired by the level of passion and commitment I've seen across the AU community. Since I arrived on campus, I launched a listening tour to hear the hopes and dreams from every constituency. The feedback shared during these more than 30 listening sessions will directly inform our upcoming strategic planning process. I also kicked off The Civic Life initiative, a campuswide effort to develop skills and create opportunities for dialogue across differences and find common ground. With its location in the nation's capital and longtime focus on public service, public policy, international relations, and more, American University is uniquely positioned to become a national model for how we bring diverse people to live, learn, and work together in peace.

Earlier this fall, AU completed the largest fundraising campaign in its history. The Change Can't Wait campaign was a seven-year effort that surpassed its original goal to raise more than \$507 million for critical priorities including impact-driven research, student thriving, and community engagement. This campaign truly pushed our institution to a new level — inspiring record-setting annual giving and alumni engagement. Unrestricted giving increased nearly threefold, and \$120 million has been added to the university's endowment.

The next Vice President of University Advancement will build on that incredible momentum and expand the culture of philanthropy that emerged from the campaign. I always tell my staff to dream big about what we can do here, and AU is poised to reach even greater heights, particularly in the fundraising sphere. We have 150,000 alumni across the nation and world, and many of them have yet to be tapped to engage in the future of this university.

At the same time, our new Vice President will be a true partner for me and my leadership team, who will play a key role in strategic planning and will be called upon to engage in life on campus, represent our university off campus, and tell the AU story. This is truly an exciting time at American University as we build on a strong foundation to define and create AU's next chapter.

I look forward to working alongside our next Vice President of University Advancement to ensure that future Eagles have the resources, opportunities, and support they need to lead and change our world.

— Jonathan R. Alger, President

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

American University is a leading student-centered research university where passionate learners, bold leaders, engaged scholars, innovators, and active citizens unleash the power of collaborative discovery. It partners with key organizations in the Washington, D.C. region and around the globe to better the human condition, learn from a vast array of experiences and internships, create meaningful change, and address society's current and emerging challenges.

Inclusive excellence is the recognition that an organization's success is conditional on how well it engages, includes, and honors the rich diversity of its community members, including its students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends and affiliates. Inclusive Excellence builds on the notions of diversity, inclusion, and equity.

American University was founded to respond to the needs of a changing world, with a set of guiding values — among them diversity, equity, and inclusion. AU cannot be excellent without being truly inclusive, and without taking the concrete, specific steps to improve the climate of its campus.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership

The Vice President of University Advancement will

- provide University Advancement with innovative, energetic, and strategic leadership;
- as a key member of the President's Cabinet, participate in strategic planning and work collaboratively with leadership across the institution to support key university priorities, initiatives, and opportunities;
- provide active counsel and support for the President, establishing a strong working relationship that maximizes efforts in the development of private support;
- partner with the President to work in close concert with the Chair of the Board of Trustees to ensure optimal involvement and impact of members of the Board within the advancement program; and
- develop and maintain effective relationships with internal stakeholders, educating and informing them of development strategies and tactics.

Fundraising and Development

The Vice President of University Advancement will

- cultivate, solicit, and steward a select group of principal and transformational gift prospects;
- provide vision and active leadership to the principal and major gift team in their work to secure major, principal, and transformational gifts;
- broaden the reach of AU through relationships with prospective donors on the national and international front to expand the scope of sustained, meaningful engagement among a larger percentage of the university's alumni; and
- work with academic departments to increase the university's ability to raise funds to support academic programs, to enhance collaboration across campus, to cultivate the next generation of major donors, and to nurture loyal and supportive alumni.

Alumni and Community Engagement

The Vice President of University Advancement will

- recognize the important role alumni relations plays in the long-term success of AU's fundraising and educational efforts by fostering collaboration between university administration and the American University Alumni Association.

Management and Team Leadership

The Vice President of University Advancement will

- recruit, train, and develop staff to serve as representatives of AU and University Advancement as well as in the development profession;
- develop staffing and budget plans that serve the goals of AU and University Advancement and plan for the future; and
- develop a strong sense of teamwork and establish an environment of mentoring and support.

Communication and Reporting

The Vice President of University Advancement will

- represent AU and University Advancement to a broad range of constituencies, including members of the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, students, alumni, friends, senior corporate executives, government officials, and foundation leaders;
- work with the Vice President and Chief Communications Officer to ensure alignment in the development and implementation of fundraising strategies, communications, cultivation, and stewardship activities; and
- develop and execute programs and events that produce measurable results and visibility.

LEADERSHIP

Jonathan R. Alger President

Jonathan R. Alger is American University's 16th President. President Alger is an experienced and visionary higher education leader who spent the last 12 years as President of James Madison University (JMU).

Under his leadership, JMU created and implemented a bold and visionary strategic plan focused on engaged learning, community engagement, and civic engagement, and developed many new initiatives such as the Valley Scholars Program for first-generation students, the comprehensive and highly successful *Unleashed* fundraising campaign, and the comprehensive Task Force on Racial Equity. President Alger also led JMU to achieve the R2 national research university designation and helped to grow the university's external research funding by 92 percent from 2019 to 2023.

President Alger is a nationally recognized scholar and speaker on higher education policy and law, who has published numerous articles for scholarly journals and publications such as *The Journal of College and University Law* and *The Law of Higher Education*.

A national leader in the field of civic engagement in higher education, Alger received the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Standout Campus President Award in 2019 and is past Chair of that organization's Presidents Council. He co-taught a leadership seminar in JMU's Honors College and previously taught graduate and undergraduate courses at Rutgers University and the University of Michigan in law, higher education, public policy, and diversity.

President Alger currently serves as Vice Chair of the national board of directors for the American Association of Colleges and Universities, as Chair of the Association of Governing Boards' Council of Presidents, and on the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics. He also is a member of the Council on Competitiveness, Council on Foreign Relations, and Institute of Citizens and Scholars' College Presidents for Civic Preparedness. He is past board Chair of Campus Compact and the National Association of College and University Attorneys and has served in many other higher education board and national leadership roles.

President Alger previously served as Senior Vice President and General Counsel at Rutgers University, and as Assistant General Counsel at the University of Michigan, where he played a key leadership role in the university's efforts in two important Supreme Court cases on diversity and admissions and coordinated one of the largest amicus brief coalitions in Supreme Court history. Earlier in his career he worked for the American Association of University Professors and the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

President Alger earned his Bachelor of Arts with high honors and Phi Beta Kappa from Swarthmore College, majoring in political science with a public policy concentration and a minor in history and his juris doctor with honors from Harvard Law School.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

American University seeks a Vice President of University Advancement with

- a commitment to the mission of American University — to advance knowledge, foster intellectual curiosity, build community, and empower lives of purpose, service, and leadership;
- substantial leadership and management experience, a history of establishing personal and professional credibility and respect, and building trust internally and externally;
- a deep understanding and knowledge of the complexities of running a comprehensive fundraising program, including annual, major, principal, planned, corporate, and foundation giving;
- superior communication skills including engaging speaking skills, strong writing and active listening skills, and an ability to communicate effectively across constituencies including among different generations;
- outstanding interpersonal and relationship management skills with the ability to navigate a complex environment, to understand and relate effectively with diverse constituents, and to partner in a compelling manner across the AU community;
- a collaborative, forward-thinking, and goal-oriented development approach;
- a track record as a major and principal gift fundraiser and manager of a mature fundraising operation with a leadership role in managing one or more comprehensive campaigns of considerable size and ambition, clearly articulating campaign priorities to a variety of internal and external stakeholders;
- a track record in fundraising in higher education or in a large nonprofit organization at the major and principal gift level;
- a professional and seasoned approach to the overall fundraising process at the highest levels of giving, and an ability to think strategically at the institutional, departmental, and individual prospect level;
- an ability to build, motivate, and provide strategic direction and leadership for a strong team;
- experience serving as a key consultant and advisor to a president or other senior leader on matters of donor and board relations as they pertain to philanthropic initiatives, and an ability to apply professional expertise as the chief fundraiser and fundraising strategist to the broader AU community, its leadership, and internal stakeholders;
- an appreciation of difference and a strong commitment to inclusiveness, an understanding of nuance, and the ability to think intentionally with an awareness of the various ways in which the campus is experienced differently by different communities and how that may affect development strategies;
- experience building trusting and open relationships with donors, recognizing and acknowledging their gifts, while also identifying individual strategies to deepen their interest and involvement;

- vision, innovation, initiative, and comfort with calculated risk taking in the implementation of best and emerging practices in development and the execution of both complex and routine strategies and initiatives; and
- a strong sense of accountability, integrity, and authenticity.

A bachelor's degree and at least ten years of progressive leadership experience in advancement, fundraising, or related fields, preferably in higher education, is required for this position. An advanced degree is preferred. American University will consider candidates with a broad range of backgrounds. If you are excited about this role and feel that you can contribute to AU, but your experience does not exactly align with every qualification listed above, we encourage you to apply.

SALARY, BENEFITS. AND CULTURE

The salary range for this role is \$400,000 to \$425,000 annually. American University offers a [comprehensive package of employee benefits](#) including medical, dental, and vision plans; retirement plan with a generous 2:1 match on the first 5%; tuition remission; education benefits for dependent children; Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA); transit benefits; parental leave; short term medical leave; long term disability; back-up dependent care; pet insurance; and group auto & home discounts. American University also provides a supportive environment focused on achieving a fulfilling work-life balance. Its dedicated staff at *AhealthyU* support the health and well-being of AU faculty and staff through integrated programs, education, and resources that encourage positive daily habits.

American University values open and honest inquiry, servant leadership, and the affirmation of the human dignity of all. It envisions a thriving American University community where individuals of all identities and experiences are understood, appreciated, and fully included, and where equitable treatment, opportunities, and outcomes prevail. American University's diverse community of students, faculty, and staff represent every state and more than 150 countries. Its internationally recognized faculty are today's thought leaders in the areas of public policy, law, the arts, communications, international development, and more. Its staff are innovative, service-oriented, and dedicated to moving the university towards achieving its strategic goals. AU is committed to an excellent experience for its students, faculty, and staff and shares a passion for creating change through their knowledge and work.

LOCATION

This position is in Washington, D.C.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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

To apply for this position, visit: [Vice President of University Advancement, American University](#).

To nominate a candidate, please contact Don Hasseltine, donhasseltine@aspingleadershipgroup.com or Ron Schiller, ronschiller@aspingleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.