

UMassAmherst Foundation

Executive Director for Board Relations & Volunteer Engagement

The Opportunity

The University of Massachusetts Amherst Foundation (UMAF or Foundation) invites applications and nominations for the position of Executive Director for Board Relations and Volunteer Engagement (Executive Director).

UMAF seeks a talented professional with board relations and volunteer engagement experience to serve as an advisor to the UMAF Board and committees, the Alumni Association board, and school and college advisory boards and provide guidance on governance best practices, operational strategies and efficiencies, and board engagement and productivity. The Executive Director reports to the Chief of Staff and works closely with the UMAF President and executive team, the Chair, Secretary, and other members of the Board of Directors, and others throughout the Foundation and greater University of Massachusetts Amherst community to build and enhance the volunteer leadership network. This individual will be knowledgeable about current best practices in board development, governance, and philanthropy and ready to serve as an integral and strategic partner to Foundation staff and University leadership.

The successful candidate will bring experience supporting boards and board leadership, managing volunteers at all levels of engagement with an organization, and developing and expanding relationships across a complex organization. They will demonstrate diplomatic skills, work well within diverse groups to achieve common goals, and lead through influence with a wide array of people. They will have experience identifying metrics that provide a comprehensive overview of volunteer engagement to guide a robust volunteer engagement strategy. Experience in a foundation or with a board that engages in fundraising is preferred.

Established in 2003, UMAF has employed development officers and management since its inception. In 2023, it assumed responsibility for all of UMass Amherst's advancement functions, including advancement services, alumni relations, advancement marketing and communications, development, campaign management, board relations, and volunteer engagement. The Foundation anticipates significant growth in staffing and operations in the coming years, and fosters a culture that supports continuous learning and development, as well as excellence in governance. To learn more about the University of Massachusetts Amherst Foundation, visit: <https://www.uma-foundation.org/>

Qualities and Qualifications

The Executive Director for Board Relations and Volunteer Engagement reports to the Chief of Staff and leads the development of a comprehensive Board and volunteer engagement program. In this role, the Executive Director will be integral to shaping the Foundation's Board governance and volunteer engagement strategy. The successful candidate will be charged with developing and implementing best practice solutions that create efficiencies and best support the volunteer ecosystem. The Foundation is seeking an Executive Director who will be highly collaborative, organized, and adept at networking and building relationships. The individual will be a self-starter ready to deploy as a strategic thought partner to UMAF staff and academic leaders in colleges and units across the University. The next Executive Director will have demonstrated success in complex organizations and a commitment to creating and promoting a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace environment.



Essential Functions:

Board Relations

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of organizational bylaws, governance documents and policies, and recommend and support any necessary changes to strengthen organizational governance and ensure the adoption of best practices.
- Work with the Alumni Relations team and the Director of Support Services to establish an optimized meeting cadence for both the Alumni Association and UMass Amherst Foundation Boards and Committees, offering guidance on governance strategies and ensuring the preparedness of the Chair, President, and other senior leaders for Board meetings.
- Develop an annual calendar of governance activities to be incorporated into committee and full board meetings.
- Proactively engage with internal stakeholders to stay informed about organizational priorities and strategic initiatives that require formal oversight and decision-making through the governance framework.
- Develop and implement efficient workflows and processes to support the development of meeting agendas, preparation and review of materials, distribution and archiving of documents for meetings of the Board of Directors and its committees and task forces.
- Maintain and manage a list of advisory Board members who are outstanding candidates for election to the UMAF Board.

- Lead and oversee policies and processes for Board appointments – including, but not limited to onboarding, orientation, coordination of participation, and end-of-term materials.
- Develop succession planning process and transition roadmaps for Board leadership, focusing on high retention and active engagement.
- Ensure regular and meaningful communication with Board members; develop, implement, and oversee UMAF Board communication strategy to ensure tailored and regular updates. Act as a trusted point of contact for Board members, creating meaningful relationships and ensuring a high level of engagement and interest.
- Support Board leadership in annual and long-term strategy and planning to include issues management, optimal committee or task force structures, chair succession strategies, etc.
- Serve as staff to the Committee on Directors and Governance and support its efforts to identify, vet, and select prospective members, identify best practices in governance, and ensure the continuing education and assessment of the board and its members.

Volunteer Engagement

- Act as a chief advisor to the President and help to manage their time effectively, particularly relating to engagement with volunteer leaders.
- Identify metrics that provide a comprehensive overview of volunteer engagement to guide the UMAF's volunteer engagement strategy.
- Collaborate with University partners to establish and maintain a diverse pool of alumni, parents, and friends suitable for various volunteer positions, ranging from entry-level to senior-level roles.
- Work with teams across the volunteer ecosystem to identify opportunities that would benefit from Board participation.
- Maintain central records regarding individual school pipelines; outstanding alumni, key donors, and volunteers who could be featured in storytelling and considered for honors; Board memberships and giving; appointments; renewals; Board profile data (gender, race, geographic representation, etc.) and rotation schedules, etc.
- Work collaboratively with the Alumni Association, the Offices of Principal Gifts, Major Gifts, Research and Prospect Management, and Stewardship and Donor Relations to maintain and refresh aggregate pipelines to assure that full consideration is being given to a diverse group of alumni and donors, donor prospects and thought leaders across all schools.

Other Duties as Assigned

UMAF is building and growing, and this position will support those efforts with other duties and projects as assigned from time to time.

Qualifications and Attributes

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent as well as a history of and commitment to ongoing professional development to upgrade knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to stay current with trends, regulations, and policy.
- Minimum of seven years of progressively responsible work experience in development and nonprofit organizations, including work with governing and advisory boards, their members, and major donors.
- Knowledge and command of nonprofit board standard governance requirements and best practices.
- Ability to manage confidential materials with discretion.
- Must be able to forge strong relationships with Board members, major donors, and colleagues; proven track record supporting effective boards and volunteer leaders as well as experience cultivating and stewarding major donors.
- Must demonstrate diplomatic skills, lead through influence, work well within diverse groups to achieve common goals, and relate well to a wide array of people.
- Forward-thinking leadership skills that can balance diverse agendas and points of view in a dynamic, outcomes-based, and enterprising environment.
- Commitment to building and sustaining an outstanding higher education advancement organization while working within budget.
- Outstanding administrative skills including the ability to prioritize time effectively and balance multiple projects simultaneously.
- Excellent project management, organizational, analytical, and interpersonal skills.
- Exceptional communications, writing, and editing skills.
- Technological/computer experience including fundraising management and board portal software.
- Must be a self-starter who is able to work independently and as part of a team and maintain a positive attitude.
- Ability to travel to meetings and events and to meet with key volunteers and donors.
- Must be able to work flexible hours, including some nights and weekends.

Leadership Opportunities

Foster Deep and Strategic Board Engagement

The Executive Director will lead efforts to create meaningful engagement opportunities for Foundation Board members, aligning their expertise, passions, and networks with the Foundation's strategic goals. This includes developing personalized pathways for board involvement, enhancing communication and collaboration, and cultivating a culture of active participation and philanthropic leadership.

Drive Excellence in Board Governance and Operations

In partnership with UMAF leadership, the Executive Director will champion the implementation of best practices in nonprofit governance. This includes overseeing onboarding and education programs, term planning and succession strategies, optimizing board structures and processes, and ensuring clarity around roles, responsibilities, and decision-making frameworks to strengthen the board's effectiveness and impact.

Champion Inclusive and Representative Leadership

The Executive Director will play a critical role in ensuring that the UMAF Board reflects the diverse voices of UMass Amherst's student, faculty, and alumni populations. This includes developing strategies to identify, recruit, and retain board members who bring varied lived experiences, perspectives, and expertise to their leadership roles and supporting equitable participation from all board members.

Contribute to Strategic Campaign Planning

As UMAF prepares for its next comprehensive fundraising campaign, the Executive Director will collaborate with senior leadership and board members to align governance and volunteer structures with campaign goals. This individual will help position board members as visible champions and stewards of the campaign, leveraging their networks to expand the Foundation's reach and influence.

Provide Cross-Board Counsel and Support

The Executive Director will also support the University of Massachusetts Amherst Alumni Association Board and the University's schools and college advisory boards by offering guidance on enhancing board functionality and effective engagement models and helping to address challenges with creative, collaborative problem-solving. By fostering a shared culture of excellence across all boards, the Executive Director will strengthen the broader volunteer ecosystem, and elevate the collective impact of the University of Massachusetts Amherst's volunteer leadership network.

About the University of Massachusetts Amherst Foundation

The University of Massachusetts Amherst Foundation, a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, secures philanthropic funds in support of the University of Massachusetts Amherst's students, faculty, programs, and facilities. Located on the Amherst campus and wholly dedicated to supporting the University's mission and highest aspirations, UMAF is a separately governed nonprofit organization with its own health, wellness, and retirement benefits. The Foundation provides a bridge between donors and the schools, programs, faculty, and students that make up the University. The UMAF team helps match caring people with meaningful opportunities that support both UMass Amherst's mission and the personal objectives of our donors.



The [2024 Generosity Highlights](#) show the foundation's impact in the last year.

UMAF is committed to building a team with these shared values:

- Service: The UMAF team focuses on the needs of others above itself and supports colleagues when they need help.
- Trust, Transparency, and Teamwork: UMAF values honesty, trustworthiness, and open communication.
- Excellence: The UMAF team pursues excellence in all that it does — each time — and learns and grows as a team.
- Wellness: The UMAF work culture provides flexibility and empowers individuals.
- Accountability: UMAF team members accept full responsibility for their decisions, actions, and results.
- Respect: UMAF team members respect each other and celebrate their different ideas, strengths, interests, and cultural backgrounds.
- Donor-Centric: UMAF finds intersections between donors' experiences and values and the organization's priorities and funding needs.
- Synergy: UMAF connects, communicates, and collaborates within teams and across functions to enhance effectiveness and impact.

Leadership

Dr. Javier Reyes, Chancellor - UMass Amherst

Dr. Javier Reyes began his tenure as Chancellor of UMass Amherst in July 2023. He serves on the Board of the UMass Amherst Foundation and works closely with its staff.

Chancellor Reyes brings his vast experience and expertise in higher education to stewarding UMass Amherst in its upward trajectory as a top-ranked public university. Formerly the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC)'s Interim Chancellor (2022–2023), Chancellor Reyes previously served as UIC's Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.



Born and raised in Mexico, Chancellor Reyes attended Tecnológico de Monterrey in Mexico City, where he earned his bachelor's degree in economics. He is considered an expert in distance education and global economic matters. An accomplished researcher, he has published articles in many leading economics and business journals.

Dr. Arwen Duffy, President - UMass Amherst Foundation

Arwen Duffy joined UMass Amherst as Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Executive Director of the UMass Amherst Foundation in fall 2021. She oversaw the restructuring of the University's advancement functions, which moved to the Foundation in spring 2023 to ensure legal and regulatory compliance. Under her leadership, UMass had its two best fundraising performances in FY22 and FY23 and delivered outstanding results in FY24, reflecting the Foundation's upward trajectory.



Dr. Duffy previously served as Assistant Vice President for Development at the University of Southern California, where she oversaw record fundraising efforts for the Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism, Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, Gould School of Law, Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry, Price School of Public Policy, Rossier School of Education, and Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work as part of the Campaign for USC. While at USC, she earned a doctorate in educational leadership; conducted research to improve in-service training for major gift officers; helped establish the USC Fundraising Institute, which provides professional development for USC Advancement staff; and served as an instructor in the Master in Nonprofit Leadership and Management program. A Yale University graduate in art, she also was Vice President of Advancement for the California Institute of the Arts, where she earned her MFA in 1994.

The Pioneer Valley, Massachusetts

Amherst and the three counties encompassing and surrounding Amherst are wonderful places to work and live. With mountains, lakes, and farmland — this area offers endless opportunities to be in the great outdoors all year round. There is a rich multicultural history in what is now known as the Pioneer Valley. UMAF's offices on the campus of UMass Amherst sit on Nonotuck land, with the Nipmuc and the Wampanoag tribes to the east, the Mohegan and Pequot tribes to the south, the Abenaki and Pocumtuck tribes to the north, and the Mohican tribes to the west. Florence was a destination town for the founder of the Underground Railroad and exhibits a memorial to Sojourner Truth, and UMass Amherst's campus is home to the entire archives of W. E. B. Du Bois, a native of Western Massachusetts.



Holyoke has the largest population of Puerto Ricans outside of Puerto Rico of any U.S. city, and with one of the highest per capita lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations in the United States, the Valley features several vibrant LGBT communities.

For those interested in the arts, food, and agriculture, Northampton — the Western Massachusetts cultural hub — is just a 15-minute drive. Amherst is also the birthplace of Emily Dickinson, and her home is now a museum located near the heart of town. Springfield, where basketball was invented, is home to the Basketball Hall of Fame. So, whether you like the outdoors, museums, music, theater, sports, multiculturalism, history, food, or farms — or all of the above — the Pioneer Valley is the place for you. Amherst is 90 miles from Boston and 175 miles from New York City.



Applications, Nominations and Expressions of Interest

AGB Search is pleased to assist the University of Massachusetts Amherst Foundation with this leadership search.

To apply for the Executive Director for Board Relations and Volunteer Engagement position, candidates are requested to submit the following:

- (i) resume;
- (ii) a letter of interest that addresses how the candidate's qualifications and experiences and qualifications connect with the qualifications and attributes and leadership priorities as expressed in this position profile; and
- (iii) contact information for five references (to be contacted with candidate's permission at a later date).

For best consideration, applications should be submitted by June 20, 2025, to the AGB Search portal at [Executive Director for Board Relations and Volunteer Engagement](#). The search will remain open until an appointment is made.

Nominations and expressions of interest in the Executive Director for Board Relations and Volunteer Engagement position are encouraged. Please direct them to UMAFED@agbsearch.com or the AGB Search consultants listed below:

Kimberly Templeton, JD
Principal
kimberly.templeton@agbsearch.com / 540.761.9494

Andrew Bowen, MA
Executive Search Consultant
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The University of Massachusetts Amherst Foundation is proud to be an equal opportunity workplace. UMAF welcomes and values diversity in all its forms and recognizes that a diverse and inclusive team strengthens our work and advances our mission. UMAF recognizes that the benefits of a diverse team are fully realized when people of all races, gender identities, ages, ethnicities, cultural heritages, and nationalities; educational backgrounds; religious and political beliefs; sexual orientations; abilities; and socioeconomic and veteran status are valued, respected, and included at every level.