



Associate Vice President for Philanthropy

Position Profile



The Opportunity

The University of Minnesota Foundation (UMF) invites nominations, inquiries, and applications for Associate Vice President for Philanthropy (AVP). The foundation seeks an exceptional individual to provide leadership and direction for development opportunities across the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD).

UMD perfectly blends the benefits of a great location, a personalized learning experience, and meaningful research on a medium-sized campus of the University of Minnesota System. At UMD, students are at the center of everything the university does, where faculty and staff establish bonds with the students, encouraging them to explore their strengths and turn their passions into careers.

Private giving has never been more important to UMD than it is today. Gifts support student scholarships and fellowships, faculty endowments, research (both faculty and student), arts, athletics, and a variety of other strategic priorities for the university.

The Position

The Associate Vice President for Philanthropy at the University of Minnesota Foundation provides strategic leadership to the philanthropy team at the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), with principal responsibility for the leadership, planning, implementation, and evaluation of a comprehensive development strategy for UMD. Reporting to the Executive Vice President of Development of the University of Minnesota Foundation (UMF) and serving as a key member of the Senior Leadership Team at UMD, the Associate Vice President leads efforts in fundraising. This role leverages the resources of UMF in support of the UMD Chancellor's vision of impactful philanthropy to advance UMD's broader goals.

Key Responsibilities

Fundraising Leadership and Strategy

- › Lead strategic planning, implementation, and assessment of the development program for UMD in collaboration with UMF and key campus leaders.
- › Develop annual and multi-year plans of work, including specific fundraising, prospect development, and programmatic goals with emphasis on achieving and exceeding established standards and metrics for the position.
- › Foster a culture of philanthropy across UMD, engaging key stakeholders including faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, prospective donors, and community partners.
- › Serve on the Chancellor's Senior Leadership Team, collaborating with other senior leaders to align fundraising with institutional priorities.
- › Support the Chancellor, senior leaders, and deans in securing transformative gifts and cultivating key relationships with major and principal gift donors.
- › Build and maintain a major and principal gifts portfolio in alignment with the Chancellor, other senior leaders, and development officers' portfolios.
- › Manage the capital campaigns for UMD in close partnership with UMF.
- › Serve as primary liaison with UMF and lead the coordination and collaboration of UMF resources across UMD.

Philanthropy Operations and Team Leadership

- › Build a collaborative, mission-driven philanthropy team culture focused on innovation, problem-solving, and professional growth, with a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- › Promote a culture of excellence, collaboration, and professional growth. Foster a work environment that recognizes and rewards team-based efforts. Celebrate current achievements. Provide the structure and guidance necessary to promote a high-performance culture.
- › Manage staff responsible for prospect and major gifts development and related operations.

- › Manage the philanthropy team, including recruitment, retention, performance management, development, and coaching of staff. Actively mentor and train staff, providing professional learning to build capacity and expertise.
- › Strengthen donor engagement and stewardship programs.
- › Prepare annual budgets and effectively manage financial resources in support of advancement goals and UMD's strategic priorities.

Organizational Leadership

- › Align goals with UMD's mission and strategic priorities, in partnership with the UMF EVP of Development, UMD Chancellor, and other senior leaders.
- › Collaborate with UMD leaders to understand their goals and mobilize donor support for key initiatives.
- › Represent UMD externally, building relationships with key donors, prospective donors, local communities, businesses, foundations, and stakeholders.
- › Coordinate UMF resources in support of UMD's development goals.
- › Promote philanthropy services across UMD and with other stakeholders and partners.

Required Qualifications

- › BA/BS degree and at least twelve years of advancement experience.
- › Minimum of seven years of experience leading, supervising, or managing multiple staff, including selection, performance management, and coaching.
- › 10 years of professional development experience and demonstrated ability to secure major gifts (\$100K+).
- › Sophisticated understanding of the role and function of philanthropy with an emphasis on fundraising production.
- › Experience or understanding of donor management technology and systems.
- › Strong interpersonal skills and ability to communicate clearly and persuasively in writing and orally.
- › Evidence of the ability to lead cross-functional teams and to work effectively and collaboratively with multiple groups and diverse constituencies.
- › Experience serving as an external advocate for a highly visible community institution or organization.

Preferred Qualifications

- › Graduate or professional degree.

- › Effective advancement management experience in a higher education environment.
- › Volunteer board management.

Overview of the University

The University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) is a comprehensive public land and sea grant university that serves as a critical driver of regional research and economic development in northeastern Minnesota.

UMD enrolls roughly 10,000 students and offers 89 undergraduate and 24 graduate programs. The University of Minnesota Medical School, Duluth campus, and the University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy, Duluth, both provide programs on the UMD campus. As a mid-sized university, UMD consistently ranks among the top Midwestern regional universities and provides an alternative to both large research universities and small liberal arts colleges, through its personalized learning experience with the feel of a larger university.

UMD has distinguished itself in natural resources and freshwater sciences and touts an impressive research portfolio with over \$25 million in annual sponsored projects. The University features several research centers, including the Large Lakes Observatory, the Natural Resources Research Institute, the Minnesota Sea Grant, and the Bureau of Business and Economic Research. The Duluth campus is known for its diverse array of academic and research facilities, which significantly contribute to the university's role in regional economic development and innovation.

Bulldog Athletics offers a balanced and competitive athletic program and is proud to have won 19 national championships. The Bulldogs compete in seven men's and nine women's varsity sports as members of the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference, the National Collegiate Hockey Conference (men), and the Western Collegiate Hockey Association (women). Nationally, UMD belongs to the National Collegiate Athletic Association and competes at the Division II level except for Division I men's and women's hockey.

Glensheen, the Historic Congdon Estate, was bequeathed to the University in 1968 and opened to the public by the Congdon family in 1979. More than 3.5 million people have experienced Glensheen, making it the most visited house museum in the Midwest. The 39-room, 27,000-square-foot mansion perched on the shore of Lake Superior is complete with a formal garden, a Carriage House, and a Gardener's Cottage. The estate shares the story of the Congdon family's significant contributions to Minnesota's iron ore mining industry and their philanthropy in creating the North Shore Scenic Highway. Tours and events are available year-round.

The City of Duluth, the fourth largest in Minnesota, overlooks Lake Superior and is home to approximately 85,000, with a metropolitan area population of nearly 300,000. Rated by Money Magazine as one of the top four Midwestern small cities for livability, Duluth was named the #1 best place to live by Outside Magazine in 2014. The city offers more than 11,000 acres of parkland for outdoor activities, including rock climbing, skiing, biking, and wildlife viewing.

Major industries in Duluth include health care, education, aviation, technology, transportation, and tourism, complemented by a thriving arts and culture scene. UMD plays a vital role in the vibrancy of the region and state and contributes close to \$1 billion in annual economic impact and more than 7,686 jobs through its operations, construction, and student and visitor spending.

How to Apply

Greenwood Asher & Associates is assisting the University of Minnesota Foundation in this search. Applications and nominations are now being accepted. Nominations and application materials should be directed to Shelley Feather and/or Jim Johnsen from Greenwood Asher & Associates at: UMDAdvancement@greenwoodsearch.com.

Shelley Feather
Senior Executive Search Consultant
shelleyfeather@greenwoodsearch.com

Jim Johnsen
Vice President of Executive Search
jimjohnsen@greenwoodsearch.com

Application materials should include:

- A letter of interest that states the applicant's qualifications for the position
- A current résumé/curriculum vitae

Submission of application materials as PDF attachments is strongly encouraged. Initial screening of applications will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made. The search will be conducted with a commitment of confidentiality for candidates until finalists are selected. For best consideration, applications and nominations should be provided by **September 15, 2025**.

Employment Requirements

Any offer of employment is contingent upon the successful completion of a background check. Our presumption is that prospective employees are eligible to work here. Criminal convictions do not automatically disqualify finalists from employment.



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

University of Minnesota, Duluth (UMD)

The University of Minnesota, Duluth (UMD) consistently ranks among the top Midwestern, regional universities in U.S. News and World Report's "America's Best Colleges" issue.

Overlooking Lake Superior, UMD provides an alternative to both large research and small liberal arts environments and attracts students looking for a personalized learning experience on a medium-sized campus of a major university. A firm liberal arts foundation anchors a variety of traditional degree programs, as well as professional and graduate students that draw on UMD's many research institutes and labs.

At the University of Minnesota, we are proud to be recognized by the Star Tribune as a Top Workplace for 2021, as well as by Forbes as Best Employers for Women and one of America's Best Employers (2015, 2018, 2019, 2023), Best Employer for Diversity (2019, 2020), Best Employer for New Grads (2018, 2019), and Best Employer by State (2019, 2022).

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