



Director, Special Initiatives, Center for Antiracist Research

Boston, MA

Boston University seeks a collaborative and entrepreneurial Director, Special Initiatives (DSI) to build donor relationships resulting in increased philanthropic giving in support of the vision of building an antiracist future for America and humanity. Inclusion has always been a fundamental part of Boston University's DNA: BU was the first university to open all divisions to female students in 1872, and it appointed the first Black dean at a predominantly white university, Howard Thurman, with whom Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. studied while earning his PhD at BU in the early 1950s. This track record of inclusion and diversity is one of the greatest institutional strengths of Boston University. This is an excellent opportunity for an enterprising development professional to work in partnership with Dr. Ibram X. Kendi to advance the Center for Antiracist Research's pressing mission.

The Special Initiatives (SI) team, led by Associate Vice President, Special Initiatives Ron Gray, is focused on securing leading philanthropic gifts in support of select University priorities, including the Center for Antiracist Research (CAR), Computing and Data Sciences (CDS), the Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases Policy & Research (CEID), the Institute for Global Sustainability (IGS), and the National Emerging Infectious Disease Laboratories (NEIDL). This team works in close coordination/collaboration with Development & Alumni Relations (DAR) colleagues, center directors, the Associate Provost for the Faculty of Computing & Data Sciences, and affiliated faculty. The team's work centers on identifying prospects through discovery and in partnership with DAR's research team to develop tactical engagement strategies. These prospect activities require collaboration with the development teams at BU's 17 schools and colleges, and often involve mapping out high-level cultivation and solicitation strategies, leading to philanthropic investments that create impactful and meaningful change.

This is an exciting opportunity for an enterprising leader in major gift fundraising to join an institution at the outset of a campaign that will propel ever-more ambitious achievement. In partnership with the AVP, the DSI will be responsible for leading a donor-centric fundraising program. The next DSI will use creative and sophisticated identification, cultivation, and solicitation methods for solicitation of gifts of \$100,000 and above from alumni, foundations, friends, and corporations, with a focus on building sustained and growing philanthropic support for CAR.

The successful candidate will ideally bring at least eight years of fundraising experience, experience working with people of diverse cultural backgrounds, and a demonstrated record of accomplishment in developing successful fundraising strategies in a complex university. The successful candidate will have a proven track record of personally identifying, cultivating, and soliciting major and principal gifts. The next Director should have a collegial style with a demonstrated ability to cultivate productive, collaborative relationships with faculty and staff across the University. The successful candidate will be an inspiring leader and an effective advocate with all constituents. In accordance with its core values and mission, BU is especially interested in recruiting members of diverse communities and individuals with a commitment to antiracism.

Center for Antiracist Research

The [Center for Antiracist Research](#) (the Center or CAR) was founded in June 2020 with a vision to create novel and practical ways to understand, explain, and solve seemingly intractable problems of racial inequity and injustice. The mission of CAR is to convene varied researchers and practitioners to foster exhaustive racial data collection, research-based policy innovation, solutions-focused narrative change initiatives, and practical advocacy campaigns. Together, these efforts power real-world antiracist change and impact. The Center has grown to approximately three dozen staff and faculty organized across four multidisciplinary teams: [research](#), [policy](#), [narrative](#), and [advocacy](#). One prominent example of the Center's work is [The Emancipator](#), a multimedia publication that reimagines 19th-century antislavery newspapers and aims to reframe the conversation on race and racism through a combination of academic scholarship and journalism.

Dr. Ibram X. Kendi

Director and Founder, Center for Antiracist Research; Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities; Professor of History

Ibram X. Kendi is a National Book Award-winning and #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of five books for adults and three books for children. Professor Kendi is a contributor writer at *The Atlantic* and a CBS News Racial Justice Contributor.

Professor Kendi is the author of *The Black Campus Movement*, which won the W.E.B. Du Bois Book Prize, and *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, which won the National Book Award for Nonfiction in 2016. Professor Kendi also has produced five #1 *New York Times* bestsellers, including *How to Be an Antiracist* and *Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019*, co-edited with Keisha Blain.

Professor Kendi has published fourteen academic essays in books and academic journals, including *The Journal of African American History*, *Journal of Social History*, *Journal of Black Studies*, *Journal of African American Studies*, and *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture*. He co-edits the Black Power Series at NYU Press with historian Ashley Farmer.

Professor Kendi has been visiting professor at Brown University, a 2013 National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellow, and postdoctoral fellow at the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis. He was also the 2020-2021 Frances B. Cashin Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. Professor Kendi was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2019, and a 2021 MacArthur Fellowship, popularly known as the "Genius Grant." He was also elected to the Society of American Historians in 2021.

Professor Kendi holds a B.S. from Florida A&M University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Temple University.

Ron Gray

Associate Vice President, Special Initiatives

Ron Gray joined Boston University as Associate Vice President, School Development in April 2017. Originally leading development teams for the Questrom School of Business, the School of Law, the Pardee School of Global Studies, and the College of Arts & Sciences, he began focusing on Special Initiatives with Dr. Ibram X.

Kendi's arrival at the university in July 2020 and added other initiatives to become Associate Vice President, Special Initiatives.

Ron has extensive experience in major and principal gifts, foundation relations, and corporate philanthropy, both in the US and internationally. He served as Director of Global Initiatives at MIT with responsibility for principal giving in Europe and lived in the United Kingdom for more than ten years while he served as the chief development officer for the University of Warwick and then Loughborough University. He has also held development positions at Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Chicago.

Ron earned a B.A. in both English and Business Administration at Principia College and an MBA in Management from the Olin School of Business at Washington University in St. Louis.

Development & Alumni Relations at BU

With an endowment valued at approximately \$3.4 billion, BU has a legacy of endowment giving in support of faculty chairs and student scholarships. The university is currently raising approximately \$225 million in annual philanthropic support. There are approximately 345,000 known prospects and more than 400,000 living alumni; the alumni giving rate is approximately 10 percent.

BU's [Board of Trustees](#) and the university's executive leadership team are invested in the future of BU and are mobilizing for a comprehensive fundraising campaign, which is currently in the quiet phase. The last campaign for BU, [Choose to Be Great](#), which closed in 2019, raised \$1.85 billion for the university.

Development & Alumni Relations (DAR) comprises a team of 255 professionals in principal, international, and major gifts, foundation relations, annual giving, alumni engagement, talent management, and operations, including stewardship, data analytics and applications, and prospect research and management. As BU prepares for another campaign, DAR is reinvigorating its approach to prospect management and analytics. DAR has recently added a Prospect Information Strategies team that is incorporating prospect analytics and predictive modeling to the work of DAR that includes information and process flows around prospect, portfolio, and pipeline development. They have also added resources to the leadership annual giving and donor experience teams, underpinning the major gifts pipeline with growth in the breadth and depth of the donor base.

DAR harnesses the power of philanthropy to make an excellent education accessible and welcoming to all, and to advance BU's global leadership in research, scholarship, artistic creation, and professional practice. To support their work, DAR has built—and is continuing to build—an outstanding team of dynamic, mission-driven advancement professionals who constantly strive to create an environment where everyone belongs. It's not just a job, but a career and a community.

DAR values:

- **Teamwork, transparency, and mutual respect**, because we value every member's contributions and know that leadership can come from anywhere
- **Diversity, equity, inclusion**, and a commitment to ensuring that each of us knows we belong here
- **Integrity** in how we work and how we treat one another
- **Strategic thinking and curiosity** in the relentless pursuit of fresh approaches and measurable results

- **Continuous growth and improvement**, both as individuals and as a team
- **Joy and shared appreciation** for working hard toward goals that matter

To hear directly about what it's like to work in DAR at BU, visit: www.bu.edu/dar-talent/voices-of-dar.

Director, Special Initiatives, Center for Antiracist Research

Reporting to the Associate Vice President, Special Initiatives, the Director is a critical member of the SI team, managing a portfolio of at least 80 major gift (\$100K+) prospects, including their cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship. In close partnership with the AVP, SI, the Director is responsible for the conceptualization and execution of a comprehensive development strategy for the Center for Antiracist Research, composed of frontline gift officer activity and management, faculty relations, advisory boards and volunteer management, event planning, alumni relations, communications and marketing, and prospect research, among other functions.

An important measure of the Director's success is their collaboration with colleagues from across Development & Alumni Relations to advance fundraising for the SI portfolio of priorities. These collaborations include the co-development of prospect strategies and serving as a content expert on the mission, vision, and priorities of the SI portfolio in select prospect meetings. Additionally, the incumbent works with the AVP, SI and Prospect Research colleagues to develop strategies to ensure the ongoing identification of potential prospects for the SI portfolio.

Essential Duties

- **Prospect work:** Identify, cultivate, and solicit major and principal gift prospects (\$100,000+). The Director conducts a minimum of 100 prospect meetings per year and completes 10 – 12 major gift solicitations of qualified prospects. Ultimately, the Director will construct a major gift portfolio with 80 – 100 prospects. (40%)
- **Strategic coordination and leadership:** Work with the AVP to develop and coordinate strategies to engage major donors to the SI portfolio, including the coordination of stewardship, events, communications, alumni relations, and prospect research. The Director also collaborates as directed with the advisory boards and staff within the SI portfolio, as well as with other key constituents and University stakeholders. (15%)
- **Prospect research and engagement:** Engage alumni and other constituents to increase their connections to the priority areas by developing, organizing, and helping to manage advisory boards and other programming, including convenings, communications, and special projects. Collaborate closely with colleagues across DAR on these efforts to engage and communicate with donors. (30%)
- **Prospect coordination:** Support the SVP for Development & Alumni Relations, VP for Development, and other senior fundraisers in their frontline fundraising efforts by providing prospect briefings and by staffing their prospect meetings when appropriate. (5%)
- **Management:** Manage SI gift officers, interns, and student employees to ensure the alignment of their

work with SI objectives and their own professional development. (10%)

Experience and Qualifications

The ideal candidate will bring many of the following professional qualities and experiences:

- A bachelor's degree is required.
- Eight or more years of directly applicable experience, including direct fundraising experience with a proven track record of soliciting and closing six-figure gifts is required.
- Personal or professional experience working with people of diverse cultural backgrounds and a demonstrated commitment to antiracism.
- The successful candidate must have a successful track record of engagement with prospects and donors and the ability to develop partnerships resulting in philanthropic support at the six- and seven-figure level.
- The incumbent will have the acumen to develop and to execute strategy in partnership with the senior leaders from within DAR and across the University, including the SVP for DAR, VP for Development, AVP for Special Initiatives, and center directors.
- The successful candidate will have demonstrated success in working and understanding the varying priorities and approaches to fundraising at a complex institution, including principal gifts, corporate and foundation relations giving, planned gifts, donor recognition and stewardship, prospect research, and alumni and other stakeholder engagement.
- Experience in a campaign setting is preferred, and experience in the design of such an effort is a distinct preference.
- The successful candidate must also successfully manage up, down, and across an organization, as well as individuals and teams. Therefore, experience in an institution of considerable organizational complexity typified by matrix relationships of power and influence is critical.
- Experience in enlisting and interacting with senior-level leadership volunteers.
- Superior communication skills—both verbal and written—and strong collaborative practices.
- The attributes of intelligence, integrity, judgment, creativity, courage of convictions, decisiveness, fairness, empathy, and a sense of humor are necessary for success.
- Exceptional reasoning, problem-solving, and analytical skills, including an ability to translate ideas and concepts into clear, actionable steps.
- Superb organizational skills and the ability to multi-task.
- Extensive travel, nights and weekends required.

Location

This is a Boston-based position. BU's campus is located in Boston's Fenway-Kenmore neighborhood. Nestled between the beautiful Charles River and historic Fenway Park (home of the Boston Red Sox), BU's location is ideal for a healthy contemporary lifestyle. Boston is a vibrant city steeped in history with diverse neighborhoods, a rich arts and culture scene, and a legacy of education, innovation, and ideas.

DAR provides a hybrid work schedule, offering employees the opportunity to work two days per week from



home, if circumstances allow. More information about the university's remote work policy is available here: www.bu.edu/hr/lifebu/remote-work.

Compensation

Compensation is highly competitive and budgeted in the range of \$170,000 – \$180,000 annually, depending on experience. Boston University offers a comprehensive [benefits package](#), which adds significantly to the employee's total compensation.

Interested in Learning More?

Boston University has partnered with Talent Citizen to assist in this recruitment. Please contact President Tracy D. Welsh, Senior Associate Rachel K. Partin, and Senior Associate Britni Russell-Bianchi to share your resume and cover letter via email at: bu-dsicar@talentcitizen.com.

Boston University is an equal opportunity employer and gives consideration for employment to qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military service, or because of marital, parental, or veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law.

If you require a reasonable accommodation in order to complete the employment application process, please contact the Equal Opportunity Office at 617-353-6474 or druckman@bu.edu.

Please note all newly hired staff and faculty, will need to be in compliance with Boston University's COVID-19 Vaccination [Policy](#) within 30 days of date of hire. For further information on the University's response to COVID-19, please visit the [Back2BU site](#).

About Boston University

Boston University is an international, comprehensive, private research university, committed to educating students to be reflective, resourceful individuals ready to live, adapt, and lead in an interconnected world. The University's 17 Schools and Colleges generate new knowledge to benefit society.

BU remains dedicated to its founding principles: that higher education should be accessible to all and that research, scholarship, artistic creation, and professional practice should be conducted in the service of the wider community—local and international. These principles endure in the University's insistence on the value of diversity, in its tradition and standards of excellence, and in its dynamic engagement with the City of Boston and the world.

Boston University comprises a remarkable range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs built on a strong foundation of the liberal arts and sciences. With the support and oversight of the Board of Trustees, the University, through its faculty, continually innovates in education and research to ensure that it meets the needs of students and an ever-changing world.