



Assistant Vice President, Alumni Relations; Executive Director, WSU Alumni Association
Detroit, MI

Wayne State University (WSU) seeks a collegial, strategic, and entrepreneurial Assistant Vice President, Alumni Relations (AVP) to lead an industrious team of engagement professionals during a time of considerable forward momentum. As Michigan's only urban research university and the third largest and most diverse university in the state, WSU is proud to hold the highest Carnegie Foundation ratings for both research intensiveness and community engagement. For more than 150 years, Wayne State has remained a steadfast partner in Detroit, engaging with the community and its people in ways that leave a lasting positive impact from educational access to research that solves real-world problems; from neighborhood service to workforce development; from economic innovation to public safety and social mobility. The diversity of people and cultures and the spirit and grit that animate them are mirrored in the university community.

The new AVP will join WSU at a time of considerable excitement and energy as Dr. Kimberly Andrews Espy was installed as the 14th University President in March 2024. Under her leadership, WSU will double-down on the university's strengths: empowering social mobility, health equity, career agility, and the vibrancy of Detroit. WSU successfully completed the historic \$776.5 million *Pivotal Moments* campaign in 2018 and is currently laying the groundwork for an ambitious \$1 billion+ comprehensive campaign effort. With seventy percent of WSU alumni living locally in Southeast Michigan, the AVP will have ripe opportunity to ignite loyalty and pride in support of President Espy's vision for robust student-alumni career linkages and institutional partnerships.

Reporting to the Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs, the AVP leads all alumni relations efforts, guiding a highly motivated and capable staff of 18 professionals with four direct reports. The AVP will serve on the Vice President's senior team and will take an innovative yet purposeful approach to WSU's existing alumni engagement efforts, prioritizing diversity and inclusion and focusing on multi-faceted engagement specific to the numerous career tracks and diverse backgrounds within the university's 300,000 alumni. The successful candidate will develop, measure, and promote a range of engagement opportunities across the university, expand a regional approach to catalyzing volunteers, and build connection with and among alumni affinity groups, while ensuring a cohesive strategy across the team. The AVP will maintain a strong focus on fostering a high level of involvement and a culture of philanthropy that reflects WSU's ambitions and distinctions, championing an integrated and collaborative approach to inspiring philanthropic support, volunteer leadership, and engaged networks.

The successful candidate is expected to have at least seven to ten years of experience with a track record of conceiving and implementing strategies that have resulted in significant increases in alumni engagement and participation. They should have a history of working collaboratively with fundraisers and designing alumni engagement plans. Strong management experience with staff, volunteers, and events teams is expected, as well as a track record of navigating a complex organization. Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills are necessary, with a philosophy of teamwork and hands-on implementation. The AVP must have a strong, metrics-driven approach to their work, an ability to work independently and set targets and goals for the Alumni Relations team based on campaign objectives and as directed by university leaders. In accordance with its core values and mission, WSU is especially interested in recruiting members of diverse communities and individuals who will promote and uphold the values embodied within the University's [Mission Statement](#).

Wayne State University

As Michigan's only public urban research university, Wayne State University has been dedicated to changing the world from the heart of Detroit for more than 150 years. Wayne State's history began in 1868, when five physicians who witnessed the crude medical treatment on Civil War battlefields committed themselves to advancing health education and care in Detroit. They founded the Detroit Medical College, which has since transformed into the School of Medicine. Today, Wayne State is a powerhouse of academic excellence, one of the nation's preeminent urban research institutions, and a thriving home to 13 schools and colleges that advance knowledge across a broad array of disciplines reflected in a diverse range of academic programs. Nearly 25,000 students from down the street and around the world call themselves Wayne State Warriors. They join roughly 300,000 alumni who, as citizens, leaders, and doers, live the Warrior spirit in every conceivable vocation.

WSU's primary focus has always been, and will remain, the success of its students, who represent diverse races, cultures, and beliefs. The university feels a deep responsibility to ensure every student has access to the opportunities a world-class college education offers. Through decades of growth and change, WSU has been guided by an unwavering commitment to academic excellence. Wayne State's faculty experts bring scholarly and professional success into classrooms and labs each day, sharing knowledge with their students and preparing them to excel in their chosen careers.

WSU is renowned for its research excellence. As one of only six public, urban universities in the United States to hold the highest Carnegie Foundation ratings for both research intensiveness and community engagement, Wayne State never loses sight of the fact that the work done on campus has implications in its own community and in communities worldwide.

Outreach and engagement are among the visionary initiatives outlined in the "Our Moment in Time" [Strategic Plan](#) for 2027, which will form the foundation for an upcoming comprehensive campaign. The five guiding strategic focus areas are: research and discovery; teaching, learning, and student success; outreach and engagement; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and financial sustainability and operational excellence.

[Dr. Kimberly Andrews Espy](#) President, Wayne State University

WSU's President, [Dr. Kimberly Andrews Espy](#), has more than 25 years of experience in higher education. President Espy previously served as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), where she championed social and economic opportunity by promoting affordable access to a top-quality research university education.

During Dr. Espy's tenure, UTSA earned the distinction of an R1 classification by the Carnegie Foundation and was invited to join the Alliance of Hispanic Serving Research Universities after earning the Seal of *Excelencia* from *Excelencia* in Education for its commitment to serving Hispanic students—and, by extension, all students. UTSA also was named a 2022 Degree Completion Finalist by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities. Her work played an important role in making UTSA one of only five research universities nationwide to receive a \$40 million gift from Mackenzie Scott in 2021 to advance student success to those underserved by higher education.

As UTSA's provost, Dr. Espy strived to advance social mobility through improved student learning, which she strengthened through a strong focus on the recruitment and retention of outstanding diverse faculty who are

leaders in their disciplines. Under her tenure, UTSA strengthened its commitment to preparing students for success beyond graduation in collaboration with the city's business and community leaders. In 2020, the university established the Najim Center for Innovation and Career Advancement, which enabled systematic career preparation activities for students across the institution. President Espy also played a key role in UTSA's contributions to San Antonio's economic development. The San Pedro 1 Building, the home for UTSA's School for Data Science, opened in 2022 and was a major university investment in the city's downtown. For her commitment to the community and her work as an agent of change, she was recognized with a Women's Leadership Award from the *San Antonio Business Journal*.

Prior to serving as UTSA's provost, President Espy was senior vice president for research at the University of Arizona, where research and development awards increased to record levels. Focusing on strategic external partnerships, she was a member of the leadership team that established the historic academic partnership with Banner Health, and also worked with industry and government partners to stand up the Defense Security Research Institute that supported mission-focused applications. She also served as vice president for research and innovation and dean of the graduate school at the University of Oregon, where she helped secure funding from the Oregon state legislature to advance economic development and value to the state. At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, President Espy developed collaborative interdisciplinary teams for large-scale proposals, including the ADVANCE initiative that increased the number of female and other diverse STEM faculty. She started her academic career at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, a rural, community-oriented medical school where she taught first-year medical student neuroscience using the then-pioneering problem-based learning curriculum, which has been widely adopted across the United States.

President Espy is an elected fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Her work has been continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health since 2002, and she has earned more than \$22 million in funding to study how young children control their attention to promote later learning, academic and health outcomes, and how such skills can be affected by medical, environmental, or social factors. As both an American Psychological Association Division 40 Early Career Award winner and Elected Fellow, President Espy has chaired NIH study sections, served other review panels, and actively contributes to the scientific literature in her field.

President Espy has served on numerous national and state leadership boards and committees, including the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable, Council on Competitiveness, Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy, Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, the Institute for Research on Innovation and Science, Arizona Technology Council, Governor's (OR) Regional Solutions Committee, and Shawnee Health Services.

President Espy received her undergraduate degree in psychology from Rice University and her M.A. and Ph.D. in clinical neuropsychology from the University of Houston. She also completed a clinical/pediatric psychology internship at the University of Louisville School of Medicine/Bingham Child Guidance Center and a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Arizona College of Medicine. She is a licensed clinical psychologist, and a native of Cincinnati.

David Ripple

Vice President, Development and Alumni Affairs; President, Wayne State University Foundation

For thirty years, David Ripple has served and led philanthropy in southeast Michigan and beyond. Initially starting his career in 1993 with Angela Hospice, Dave has gone on to successfully lead some of the largest fundraising shops and campaigns in the region. He continues to work with donors, leaders, and fundraisers in

his current role as Vice President of Development and Alumni Affairs and President of the Wayne State University Foundation. Dave is a member of the President's cabinet and works closely with local governments and community leaders as a trusted advisor, linking the needs of the University with external resources and advocates.

Prior to Wayne State, Dave was Vice President of Development at Trinity Health Michigan, Southeast Region where he oversaw the philanthropy team in major and planned giving, communications, advancement services, and donor experience for five hospitals in the region. Dave's entrepreneurial drive, combined with his 30 years of experience, makes him a successful, progressive, and experienced fundraiser and leader.

What sets Dave apart as a leader in the fundraising community is his sense of integrity and a keen understanding of how important a people-centered focus is to successful fundraising programs. His breadth and diversity of fundraising experience allows him to understand all the nuts and bolts of an advancement team and how these pieces work together to meet the donor and the organization's needs.

For example, at Trinity Health Michigan, Dave developed and led a complete reorganization of the development team in 2019 to move away from event-based fundraising to an industry best-practice major gifts model. Never one to shy away from change or a challenge, he undertook this reorganization knowing that implementing a new system is so much more than simply changing the fundraising model.

He has held a series of senior positions, always rising to the challenge at hand, sometimes in the face of difficult circumstances. In 2020 and 2021, St. Joseph Mercy Health System led Trinity Health as the top fundraising ministry in the country, raising money for frontline workers and emergency COVID relief, with record numbers of new donors to the system.

Dave earned an Associate of Arts degree in journalism from Schoolcraft College, a Bachelor's in Journalism and Public Relations from Madonna University, and a Master of Arts in English from Eastern Michigan University.

Outside of his professional roles, Dave is a life-long volunteer and community advocate. He is a longtime resident in the Plymouth/Canton Community and recently served as Chair of the Board of Directors for the Educational Excellence Foundation and was a member of the Lutheran Social Services of Michigan board.

Development & Alumni Affairs at Wayne State

The Division of Development and Alumni Affairs (DAA) at Wayne State University is set to begin a new course in fundraising, engagement, and impact. Building on the success of *Pivotal Moments*, the most recent \$750 million campaign, which concluded in 2018 having secured more than \$776 million, DAA is expanding its division to meet the challenge of the next campaign. Comprising 160 professionals across fundraising, alumni relations, business affairs, campaign, and development events and communications, the division is laser-focused on enabling the success of the university's mission by garnering philanthropic resources and community support in all its forms, including volunteerism, storytelling, career enablement, and advocacy.

Wayne State is fully committed to achieving the goal of a diverse and inclusive community of faculty, staff, and students. DAA seeks individuals who are committed to this goal and the core campus values outlined below. Diversity isn't a slogan at Wayne State; it's a reality that's woven into the mission and guides everything WSU employees do.

Inspired by Wayne State's five-year [strategic plan](#) entitled "Our Moment in Time," the university's next comprehensive campaign represents real world opportunities to advance student success, research, community engagement in Detroit, and more.

WSU values:

- **Collaboration:** When we work together, drawing upon various talents and perspectives, we achieve better results.
- **Integrity:** We keep our word, live up to our commitments, and are accountable to ourselves and each other.
- **Innovation:** We are unafraid to try new things and learn by both failure and success.
- **Excellence:** We strive for the highest-quality outcomes in everything we do.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** We value all people and understand that their unique experiences, talents, and perspectives make us a stronger organization and better people.
- **Leadership:** We are proud of our long history as an anchor institution in Detroit and will continue to serve our community while playing a lead role in the city's resurgence.

To learn more about Alumni Relations at Wayne State, please visit <https://alumni.wayne.edu>.

Assistant Vice President, Alumni Relations; Executive Director, WSU Alumni Association

The Assistant Vice President, Alumni Relations will provide vision and leadership for alumni programs (both university-wide and school/college-specific) and related initiatives offered under the WSU Alumni Association (WSUAA) brand. The AVP will be responsible for the strategic planning, creation, delivery, and maintenance of a comprehensive suite of alumni programs, communications, services, and volunteer opportunities meant to enhance philanthropic support and increase alumni connection and engagement while holding the contextual framing of alumni and key supporters' role and impact as changemakers contributing to the reinvigoration of the City of Detroit. This position also serves as the Executive Director and Treasurer of the WSU Alumni Association, an independent 501(c)(3) with a 20-member board of directors and zero employees. This position and all members of the Alumni Relations team are employees of Wayne State University.

Reporting to the Vice President of Development and Alumni Affairs, the AVP is a member of the senior leadership team and a thought leader and partner across the Development organization. In doing so, the AVP collaborates regularly with other fundraising unit leaders, including those in Major and Planned Giving, Annual Giving, Corporate and Foundation Relations, and Development Communications. As a senior representative of WSU, the AVP will work in collaborative coordination with senior campus leaders, such as members of the Office of the President and the Office of University Relations, including University Marketing and Communications.

Essential Duties

- Provide vision and leadership for the alumni relations team. Manage the strategic planning process for alumni engagement and monitor programmatic progress. Establish organizational plans to meet engagement and philanthropy goals and oversee a comprehensive program that focuses on continued growth, innovation, and engagement.
- Responsible for the design, planning, and implementation of programs, communications, services, and volunteer opportunities meant to increase alumni loyalty and engagement with the university. Apply specific strategies for varying alumni populations, including affinity & identity groups, recent alumni,

future alumni, and alumni volunteers. Oversee the development and implementation of marketing plans to increase alumni participation by identifying segmented target groups and creating innovative communication campaigns.

- Maintain a partnership with the WSUAA Board President and the members of the Board. Provide guidance and leadership for other alumni volunteer groups, including the school/college alumni councils, affinity groups, and the WSUAA Past Presidents Council. Cultivate, manage, and broaden relationships with key university volunteers, including members of the WSUAA board of directors, its committees, and alumni volunteer leaders in key regions around the country.
- Collaborate with colleagues in the division to enhance cultivation and stewardship strategies through personal alumni outreach and visits.
- Provide oversight of the design, planning, direction, and implementation of department communications including the WSU Alumni Association's award-winning magazine, electronic newsletters, mailings, targeted email campaigns, social media, giving day, and other communications meant to build and enhance engagement, ensuring consistency in brand, themes, and messaging with development and university communications.
- Supervise a diverse staff, effectively managing performance to meet individual and team initiatives; foster a collegial and highly productive work environment. Recruit, hire, train, coach, evaluate, and mentor staff. Establish and communicate performance expectations in a manner that motivates and empowers staff to fulfill job duties. Encourage, support, and ensure employee participation in training and development programs.
- Develop goals and set operational standards for the alumni relations unit. Conduct periodic review, assess department's performance, and implement strategic changes/enhancements as needed. Execute and evaluate alumni relations programs, communications campaigns, and events. Evaluate the success and effectiveness of annual engagement efforts through statistical and qualitative analysis.
- Manage unit's annual budget. Develop revenue and expense projections, approve expenditures at unit level and monitor transactions for compliance with university policies and procedures. Establish priorities and determine operating budgets of affiliated alumni volunteer councils and affinity groups; oversee related expenditures.
- Network with outside professional groups and organizations to keep abreast of current industry trends and best practices related to alumni relations and engagement. Represent Development & Alumni Affairs at industry or community meetings at the request of division leaders.

Experience and Qualifications

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

- A Bachelor's degree is required; an advanced degree is preferred.
- A minimum of seven to ten years of experience in the planning, development, and implementation of programs, policies, and procedures in a complex higher education environment.
- A minimum of five years of experience managing personnel, preferably in an advancement, higher education, or nonprofit environment.
- Professional understanding of, and interest in, Development and Alumni Affairs best practices and general operations.
- Proven success in leading alumni relations programs and fundraising with demonstrated effectiveness in working with high-level volunteers, donors, and senior leaders.

- Positive and collaborative professional philosophy, recognizing that this position is integral to the achievement of the goals and objectives of Development and Alumni Affairs.
- Excellent written and oral communication and presentation skills.
- A disposition to listen and circulate widely; outstanding interpersonal skills.
- 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.
- Ability to work independently as well collaboratively with team members.
- Some travel, nights and weekends required.

Location

WSU's 200-acre main campus is woven into the fabric of Detroit. Located in [Midtown](#), one of the country's fastest-growing neighborhoods, the campus is part of a vibrant cultural center, steps from world-famous galleries, theatres, restaurants, and businesses. More than 2.5 million visitors come to Midtown each year, and Detroit was named one of the [world's top 50 travel destinations](#). Some of the city's best elements are its architectural history, Motown music, thriving sports scene, art culture, and excellent selection of restaurants, craft breweries, and cocktail bars. The world-renowned Detroit Institute of Arts is located steps from campus, and was recently named the [best art museum](#) in the United States.

Compensation and Schedule

Compensation is highly competitive and budgeted in the range of \$150,000 - \$175,000 annually, depending on experience. Wayne State University offers a comprehensive [benefits package](#), which adds significantly to the employee's total compensation package.

WSU 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](#).

Interested in Learning More?

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

Wayne State University provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetics. The university encourages applications from women, people of color, and other underrepresented people. Wayne State is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

Information about WSU's COVID-19 policies is available [here](#).