



Senior Major Gift Officer, Parent & Family Philanthropy
Boston, MA

Boston University (BU) seeks a collaborative and enterprising Senior Major Gift Officer, Parent & Family Philanthropy (Sr. MGO) to engage, cultivate, and increase philanthropic support from a diverse and energetic community of BU parents and families. The Sr. MGO will be a strategic thought partner in building the pipeline for the Parent & Family Philanthropy program, contributing to the success of the University's next multi-billion-dollar comprehensive campaign and creating lasting impact for future generations of Terriers.

Founded in 1839, Boston University is one of the largest nonprofit universities in the country composed of 17 Schools and Colleges attended by more than 37,000 students representing all 50 U.S. states and 140 countries. BU's diversity is one of its greatest institutional strengths, underpinned by its commitment to empowering students, staff, and faculty to promote inclusivity across a large, urban campus through initiatives such as the [Newbury Center](#) for first-generation student success and the [LGBTQIA+ Student Resource Center](#). With 37 student-run teams, BU students have the opportunity to participate in club sports, and approximately 600 student-athletes compete at the highest level of college athletics in 24 NCAA Division I varsity sports while excelling in the classroom and engaging in the local community with support from [Student-Athlete Academic Support Services](#). In 2025, the University was one of only 16 colleges named in the *Princeton Review's* inaugural Mental Health Services Honor Roll for its commitment to addressing mental health challenges and promoting wellness through BU's [Student Health Services](#) office and [Student Wellbeing](#) initiative. Under the leadership of President Melissa Gilliam—a medical doctor, MacArthur-grant winning researcher, and adolescent health advocate who assumed the University presidency in July 2024—BU's traditions of intellectual courage, academic rigor, service, openness, creativity, and the arts will serve as tools to drive the University's next era of transformation.

Reporting to the Director of Parent & Family Philanthropy, the Sr. MGO will collaborate with colleagues across Development & Alumni Relations (DAR) and the University to engage high-level parent prospects and secure major and principal gifts. The Sr. MGO will utilize data-driven strategies to identify, qualify, cultivate, and solicit prospects capable of making gifts of \$100,000 or more, with a focus on growing the Parents Leadership Council and strengthening parent and family engagement across the U.S. The Sr. MGO will contribute to stewardship efforts and the overall strategy for the Parent & Family Philanthropy program.

The successful candidate will bring a minimum of eight years of development or commensurate experience, including three to five years of major gift solicitation, ideally at the six-figure level. A demonstrated record of accomplishment in closing major gifts and developing successful engagement and fundraising strategies in a complex organization is required. The Sr. MGO must be knowledgeable about the nuances of building relationships with families and parents in an educational setting. The successful candidate should possess exceptional verbal, written, and presentation skills and a collegial, team-building style with a demonstrated ability to cultivate productive, collaborative relationships. The Sr. MGO will contribute to a professional work environment that rewards individual and collective success, builds confidence, and promotes diversity in all its forms. In accordance with its core values and mission, BU is especially interested in recruiting members of diverse communities and individuals who will promote and uphold the values embodied within the University's [Diversity Statement](#).

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. Boston University is committed to generating 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.

Dr. Melissa L. Gilliam

President, Boston University

BU's President, [Dr. Melissa L. Gilliam](#), is a national leader in faculty recruitment and student success and a champion of diversity and inclusion. Dr. Gilliam is a professor of obstetrics, gynecology, and pediatrics; her scholarship focuses on developing interventions to promote adolescent health and well-being. Dr. Gilliam graduated from Harvard Medical School and earned a Master of Public Health from the University of Illinois Chicago. In addition to her deep background in the sciences and medicine, she studied English literature at Yale University and earned her Master of Arts in philosophy and politics from the University of Oxford.

Before her appointment as BU President, Dr. Gilliam served as the executive vice president and provost of The Ohio State University, overseeing 15 colleges and six campuses and the Office of Academic Affairs, including undergraduate education, graduate education, international affairs, diversity and inclusion, external engagement, online learning, and information technology.

Brian Denning

Director, Parent & Family Philanthropy

Brian Denning leads the Boston University Parent & Family Philanthropy program and manages a portfolio of prospects and donors. As a senior leader on the Major Gifts team, Denning sets the strategy to engage, cultivate, and solicit gifts from some of the University's most dedicated and engaged families.

Prior to joining BU, Denning was the Vice President of Advancement at Emmanuel College where he oversaw the College's fundraising and alumni relations efforts to strengthen relationships with generations of graduates and cultivate a culture of engagement and giving. Denning's decades-long career includes advancement roles at Boston College, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Northeastern University, among other distinguished organizations.

Development & Alumni Relations at BU

With an endowment valued at approximately \$3.5 billion, BU has a legacy of endowment giving in support of faculty chairs and student scholarships. In FY2024, the University raised \$349 million in annual philanthropic support. There are approximately 350,000 known prospects and more than 455,000 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](#), closed in 2019 and raised \$1.85 billion for the University.

Development & Alumni Relations (DAR) comprises a team of 270+ professionals in principal, international, and major gifts, foundation relations, annual giving, alumni engagement, stewardship, talent management, and advancement information systems, including database management and prospect research. As part of the BU Major Gifts team, the Parent & Family Philanthropy program focuses on building and cultivating a community of parents and families that lead to six- and seven-figure gifts supporting University and Presidential priorities. The team works in close coordination and collaboration with DAR colleagues, Athletics, Schools and Colleges, and the Dean of Students Office. The Parents Leadership Council (PLC) is a growing group composed of 125 engaged families who have pledged a gift of at least \$10,000.

As BU prepares for another campaign, DAR is reinvigorating its approach to prospect management and analytics. DAR has added a Prospect Information Strategies team that is incorporating prospect analytics and predictive modeling, which 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. These are just a few of the exciting areas of investment in staff and resources aimed at supporting the ramp up into the next campaign.

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 learn more about the DAR team please visit www.bu.edu/dar-talent.

Senior Major Gift Officer, Parent & Family Philanthropy

The Senior Major Gift Officer, Parent & Family Philanthropy (Sr. MGO) collaborates with colleagues across DAR and the University, including Major Gifts, Planned Giving, Special Initiatives, Principal Gifts, Athletics, Dean of Students Office, University Centers, and Schools and Colleges, to build community, develop a pipeline of major and principal gift donors, and secure major and principal gifts.

In partnership with the Director, Parent & Family Philanthropy, the Sr. MGO will set annual and long-term goals for regional and portfolio growth aligned with University and Presidential priorities. The Sr. MGO will engage high-level prospects and volunteers to cultivate the parent community and grow the Parents Leadership Council (PLC) domestically. This position collaborates with members of BU's faculty and staff to understand institutional priorities and demonstrate how philanthropic support impacts students and the BU community.

The Sr. MGO will maintain strong working relationships across DAR and the greater BU community and will leverage data to identify, qualify, and solicit major and principal gifts. This role requires a deep understanding of donor engagement, including identification, qualification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship, as well as experience working with faculty members, senior leaders, and strategic campus partners. The Sr. MGO will also manage special projects as assigned by the Director, Parent & Family Philanthropy and travel domestically to major and secondary markets.

Essential Duties

Prospect Identification, Cultivation, and Solicitation

- Develop and manage a portfolio of 150+ major gift prospects.
- Cultivate and solicit major gifts (\$100K+) and principal gifts (\$1M+).
- Collaborate with the Director, Parent & Family Philanthropy and Prospect Research colleagues to build a prospect portfolio of rated prospects aligned with University priorities.
- Develop solicitation strategies in collaboration with faculty members, senior leaders, and campus partners.
- Prepare written proposals, gift agreements, and other materials for solicitations.
- Work with Planned Giving and Foundation Relations colleagues to develop strategies for soliciting individuals, corporations, and foundations.
- Meet DAR performance metrics, including 100 prospect visits annually (in-person or virtual) and solicit 12+ major gifts within the first 18 to 24 months.
- Collaborate with events teams and volunteers to organize regional events and build a culture of philanthropy among BU parents.
- Focus on a list of top 25 parent prospects, developing tailored strategies for each.

Program Management and Planning

- Collaborate to grow the Parents Leadership Council (PLC) and enhance the current parent engagement offerings.
- Set long-term goals aligned with University and campaign priorities.
- Build strong relationships with faculty members, administrators, and colleagues to develop compelling cases for support.
- Assist in creating and revising annual operating plans and budgets to achieve goals.

- Conduct an annual review of fundraising strategies and adjust as necessary.
- Mentor and train support staff, ensuring alignment with goals.
- Manage and track prospect/donor lists and activity across Advancement departments.

Stewardship and Donor Relations

- Partner with the Executive Director of Donor Relations and Stewardship to create and implement stewardship programs for major donors.
- Regularly update donors on the impact of their gifts and any changes at the University.
- Extend appropriate courtesies to donors and volunteers.

Special Projects

- Manage special projects as assigned by the Director, Parent & Family Philanthropy and Assistant Vice President, Major Gifts.

Experience and Qualifications

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

- Bachelor's degree required
- Minimum of eight years of directly related experience in fundraising or a related field, with three to five years of major gift solicitation experience, ideally at the six-figure level
- Proven track record of securing five- and six-figure gifts
- Experience in building and managing a major gift portfolio
- Strong written, verbal, and presentation communication skills
- Excellent judgment, attention to detail, and the ability to prioritize competing tasks
- Exceptional interpersonal, analytical, and project management skills
- Strength in a collaborative approach to the work
- Strong organizational skills and the ability to manage multiple tasks effectively
- Ability to travel monthly, including nights and weekends
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office and CRM database management

Location and Schedule

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 hybrid work policy is available [here](#).

Compensation

Compensation is highly competitive and budgeted in the range of \$125,000 – \$135,000 annually, depending



on experience. Boston University offers a comprehensive [benefits package](#), which adds significantly to the employee's total compensation package.

Interested in Learning More?

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

Boston University is an equal opportunity employer, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, natural or protective hairstyle, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military service, pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, or because of marital, parental, or veteran status. Boston University is a VEVRAA Federal Contractor.

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