



**Associate Vice President, Principal Giving**  
*Detroit, MI*

Wayne State University (WSU) seeks a strategic, creative, and collaborative Associate Vice President, Principal Giving (AVP) to lead a bold principal and transformational giving program during a time of record-breaking fundraising success. 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 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 momentum as the university prepares to announce the public launch of an ambitious \$1 billion+ comprehensive campaign effort. The campaign is designed to double-down on the university's strengths: empowering social mobility, health equity, economic growth, and the vibrancy of Detroit. With 2025 marking the biggest fundraising year in the university's history, WSU is poised for even greater heights. WSU's donors have led by example with recent gifts of \$50 million and \$20 million, and the power of collective giving is palpable with a record \$2.3 million raised on Giving Day 2025, highlighting the pride and loyalty of WSU's alumni community, more than 70 percent of whom live in southeast Michigan. The AVP will have a strong platform from which to continue elevating sights while playing a significant leadership role in achieving campaign success.

Reporting to the Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs and working closely with the Office of the President, the AVP will lead principal giving efforts university-wide, taking a strategic approach to maximizing efforts, assets, and impact. The AVP will serve on the Vice President's senior team and will elevate cross-unit giving opportunities while inviting donors and university leaders to mirror the powerful, determined, and ambitious qualities that define Wayne State Warriors. The AVP will work internally and externally to accelerate strategic thinking and relationship building. Leading through influence and example, the AVP will engender a spirit of shared success and greater collective impact across the enterprise.

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 personally securing seven-figure gifts and higher. They should have a history of working collaboratively with academic leaders and crafting highly complex proposals, gift documentation, and meaningful engagement approaches. Strong financial acumen 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 transparent, planful, and proactive approach to their work as well as a clear, responsive, and graceful communication style. In accordance with its core values, WSU is especially interested in recruiting 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 309,000 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.

Enhancing the culture of philanthropy to achieve financial sustainability is among the goals outlined in the "Our Moment in Time" [Strategic Plan](#) for 2027, which will form the foundation for the upcoming comprehensive campaign. Pillars of focus include the [Grand Challenges](#) initiative, accelerating [mobility](#), and empowering health through the establishment of a new [school of public health](#) and construction of a new [Health Sciences Research Building](#).

### David Ripple

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

For more than 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 enhancing its division to meet the challenge of the next campaign. Comprising approximately 150 professionals across fundraising, alumni relations, business affairs, campaign, advancement services, 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.

DAA achieved a [record-breaking fundraising year](#) in fiscal year 2025, raising more than \$138 million. 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.

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.

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 Development at Wayne State, please visit <https://giving.wayne.edu>.

### Associate Vice President, Principal Giving

The Associate Vice President, Principal Giving will provide vision, strategy, and leadership for principal and transformational giving at Wayne State University. The AVP will personally manage a prospect portfolio to achieve ambitious fundraising goals annually. As a program leader, the AVP will develop, coordinate, and manage fundraising strategies and initiatives to secure principal (\$1 million+) and transformational (\$10 million+) gifts from the university's highest potential prospective donors to fund university priorities, enhance the university's philanthropic support, and meet aggressive fundraising goals. As a university citizen, the AVP will coordinate the cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of principal and transformational gift donors. The AVP will manage the Principal Giving Program Strategist and provide guidance to administrative support professionals.

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, Alumni Relations, Annual Giving, Prospect Development, Advancement Services, and Advancement 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, the Office of University Relations, and the Deans of colleges and schools.

### Essential Duties

- Personally manage a prospect portfolio to achieve ambitious annual fundraising and visit goals. Establish and implement prospect qualification, cultivation, and solicitation strategies focusing on securing commitments of \$1,000,000+. Draft and negotiate highly complex gift and pledge documentation.
- Establish and implement prospect qualification, cultivation, and solicitation strategies for the university's highest-level gift donors and prospects. Devise and oversee the creation of highly customized, robust solicitation materials for principal and transformational gift donors and prospects. Work closely with the university President, Vice President of Development, and other

executive leaders to secure principal and transformational gifts to fund university priorities and meet aggressive fundraising goals.

- Collaborate with and support school- and college-based fundraising and academic colleagues on implementing strategies for principal and transformational gift donors and prospects; ensure coordination across multiple departments. Lead and convene effective and productive principal gift strategy sessions on a scheduled cadence.
- Supervise staff, effectively managing performance to meet individual and team initiatives; foster a collegial and highly productive work environment. Recruit, interview, hire, train, coach, and evaluate 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.
- Manage unit's annual budget. Develop expense projections, approve expenditures at unit level, and monitor transactions for compliance with university policies and procedures.
- Network with outside professional groups and organizations to keep abreast of current industry trends and best practices related to principal gift fundraising. Represent Development & Alumni Affairs at industry or community meetings at the request of leadership.
- Special projects and other duties as assigned.

## 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.
- Minimum of 7 – 10 years of experience in the planning, development, and implementation of fundraising strategies, policies, and procedures for highly sophisticated individual giving programs.
- At least 5 years of senior-level management responsibility in a complex organization, preferably higher education.
- Minimum of 5 years' experience managing personnel.
- Proven ability to qualify, cultivate, and solicit high-level donors and prospects. Track record of closing seven-figure gifts.
- Professional understanding of, and interest in, Development and Alumni Affairs best practices and general operations. Understanding of trends and best practices within higher education fundraising.
- 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 as collaboratively with team members.
- Some travel, nights and weekends required.

## Location

This is a Detroit-based position. 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, theaters, 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 \$200,000 - \$230,000 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. Given the interface with cabinet-level executives, candidates for the AVP position should expect to spend a significant proportion of time on campus or traveling for university business. 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 and Managing Director Rachel K. Partin to share your resume and cover letter via email at: [wsu-avppg@talentcitizen.com](mailto:wsu-avppg@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.*