Executive Director, Advancement Operations

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Type: Full-Time
Salary: $127,500 - $140,000 per year
Posted: 18 days ago
Category: Development and Fundraising; Other Executive
Inclusive



JOB TITLE
Executive Director, Advancement Operations

LOCATION
Worcester

DEPARTMENT NAME
Advancement Operations

DIVISION NAME
Worcester Polytechnic Institute - WPI

JOB DESCRIPTION SUMMARY
The Executive Director, Advancement Operations leads the operational infrastructure that enables WPI's advancement program, ensuring excellence in gift processing, database management, prospect research, reporting and analytics, compliance, and technology systems. This senior leader creates efficient, accurate, and strategic operations that empower fundraisers to focus on donor relationships while providing the data, insights, and tools needed for success. Reporting to the Associate Vice President, Advancement Operations and Engagement, the Executive Director manages day-to-day operations, drives continuous improvement, leads technology strategy, and ensures advancement systems support both campaign completion and long-term sustainable growth. This role requires deep technical expertise, strategic thinking, exceptional management skills, and a commitment to service excellence.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Operational Leadership & Management

Provide day-to-day leadership for advancement operations including gift processing, database management, acknowledgments, and compliance

Ensure accurate, timely processing of all gifts with 99%+ accuracy and full compliance with IRS regulations, CASE standards, and university policies

Oversee gift entry, batch processing, pledge management, matching gift coordination, and gift crediting protocols

Develop and maintain operations policies, procedures, and documentation; ensure consistent application across team

Manage operations budget, ensuring cost-effectiveness and strategic resource allocation

Establish service level agreements with development staff and ensure operations team meets or exceeds expectations

Lead team of operations staff including gift processors, database administrators, and coordinators

Create culture of accuracy, efficiency, service excellence, and continuous improvement

Database & Technology Management

Serve as primary steward of advancement CRM (Salesforce or equivalent), ensuring data integrity, accessibility, and strategic use

Oversee database configuration, customization, integration with other campus systems, and upgrades

Develop and enforce data standards, integrity protocols, and quality assurance processes

Lead data cleanup initiatives, duplicate management, and ongoing database hygiene

Manage user access, security protocols, and training for advancement staff using database systems

Evaluate and implement advancement technology tools including wealth screening, email platforms, online giving, event management, and prospect tracking systems

Lead technology vendor relationships, contract negotiations, and system implementations

- Explore and pilot AI, automation, and emerging technologies that enhance operational efficiency
- Partner with IT on technical infrastructure, integrations, and support
- Ensure business continuity planning and disaster recovery protocols for advancement systems

Prospect Research & Analytics

- Provide strategic oversight for prospect research function, ensuring effective identification, qualification, and assignment of prospects
- Partner with research team to develop screening strategies, capacity ratings, and portfolio management protocols
- Oversee wealth screening, biographical research, and prospect profiling processes
- Ensure gift officers have timely, accurate research support for cultivation and solicitation activities
- Develop analytics framework that provides actionable insights on fundraising performance, pipeline health, and donor trends
- Create dashboards and reports for leadership, gift officers, and board that enable data-informed decision-making
- Track and report on key performance indicators including pipeline metrics, proposal activity, gift pacing, and goal progress
- Conduct predictive analytics to identify trends, opportunities, and areas requiring attention
- Lead data visualization and storytelling that makes complex information accessible and actionable

Compliance & Gift Administration

- Ensure full compliance with IRS regulations for charitable contributions, gift substantiation, and quid pro quo disclosures
- Oversee complex gift administration including pledges, matching gifts, planned gift recording, and estate distributions
- Partner with Finance on gift reconciliation, endowment recording, and financial reporting

Collaborate with Legal Counsel on gift agreements, naming opportunities, and donor intent documentation

Maintain gift acceptance policies and advise on non-standard gifts (real estate, securities, complex assets)

Prepare audit materials and respond to internal and external audit requests

Track and report on restricted gifts, ensuring appropriate fund coding and stewardship requirements

Strategic Partnership & Service Excellence

Serve as trusted partner to frontline fundraisers, providing excellent service, responsiveness, and problem-solving

Train advancement staff on database use, gift coding, moves management documentation, and operational protocols

Anticipate needs and proactively provide support that enables fundraising success

Gather feedback from internal customers and continuously improve operations based on their needs

Participate in divisional strategic planning and contribute operations perspective

Represent operations on cross-functional teams and matrix project pilots

- Stay current on advancement operations best practices through professional associations and peer learning
- Other duties as assigned by supervisor

Qualifications:

Bachelor's degree; Master's degree preferred

8-10 years of advancement operations experience with progressive responsibility

Minimum 5 years managing operations teams and complex database systems

Expert-level knowledge of Blackbaud/Raiser's Edge or comparable advancement CRM

Deep understanding of gift processing, IRS compliance, CASE standards, and advancement operations best practices

Strong technical aptitude and experience implementing/managing advancement technology tools

Proven ability to ensure data integrity and establish quality control processes

Experience with prospect research, wealth screening, and analytics

Exceptional project management skills and ability to manage multiple concurrent initiatives

Strong analytical skills and comfort with data analysis, reporting, and visualization tools

Outstanding attention to detail and commitment to accuracy

Excellent communication skills and ability to translate technical concepts for non-technical audiences

Service-oriented mindset and commitment to supporting frontline fundraising staff

Experience in higher education advancement preferred

Supervisory experience with demonstrated ability to build and develop high-performing teams

Preferred:

Experience in comprehensive campaign environment

Knowledge of planned giving administration and complex gift processing

Familiarity with financial reconciliation and endowment accounting

SQL, Python, or other database query/programming skills

Experience with data visualization tools (Tableau, Power BI)

Understanding of AI and automation applications in advancement operations

Certification in database administration or relevant technical credentials

CFRE or commitment to obtain

Salary Grade 12: $127,500 - $140,000 per year (depending on experience)

Salary is based on related experience, expertise, and internal equity; generally, new hires can expect pay between the minimum and midpoint of the range.

Compensation at WPI

FLSA STATUS
United States of America (Exempt)

WPI is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified candidates will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran status, or disability. It seeks individuals from all backgrounds and experiences who will contribute to a culture of creativity, collaboration, inclusion, problem solving, innovation, high performance, and change making. It is committed to maintaining a campus environment free of harassment and discrimination.

To apply, visit:https://wpi.wd5.myworkdayjobs.com/en-US/WPI_External_Career_Site/job/Worcester/Executive-Director--Advancement-Operations_R0003353

About WPI
WPI is a vibrant, active, and diverse community of extraordinary students, world-renowned faculty, and state of the art research facilities. At WPI, we have competitive and comprehensive benefits, including health insurance, long-term care, retirement, tuition assistance, flexible spending accounts, work-life balance and much more.

Diversity & Inclusion at WPI
WPI is committed to creating an inclusive workplace where everyone feels valued and respected; a place where every student, faculty and staff member can be themselves, so that they can study, live, and work comfortably, to reach their full potential, and make meaningful contributions in order to meet departmental and institutional goals. WPI thrives on innovative practice and welcomes diverse perspectives, insight, and people from diverse lived experiences, to enhance the community environment and propel the institution to the next level in a competitive, global marketplace.

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