



Wisconsin Foundation & Alumni Association

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Vice President and Managing Group Leader for Wisconsin Medicine
Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association
Madison, Wisconsin

THE SEARCH

The [Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association](#) (WFAA) seeks a visionary, strategic, and experienced healthcare advancement leader to serve as Vice President and Managing Group Leader for Wisconsin Medicine (VP/MGL). As the chief fundraiser and strategist for all medical advancement, the VP/MGL will lead philanthropic efforts across Wisconsin Medicine—an integrated partnership between the University of Wisconsin (UW) [School of Medicine and Public Health](#) (SMPH) and [UW Health](#), the university's affiliated health system. The VP/MGL will build upon the momentum and success of medical advancement to further elevate the program as a best-in-class academic medical fundraising enterprise at a pivotal moment.

Wisconsin Medicine has experienced dramatic growth and transformation over the last two decades, moving from nascency into a \$100 million-a-year fundraising operation. In 2022, Wisconsin Medicine embarked upon its first-ever campaign to secure \$500 million by December 2025. As of February 2025, the \$500 million goal has been exceeded. As WFAA now prepares for a university-wide comprehensive campaign, the VP/MGL will play a key role in shaping Wisconsin Medicine's next chapter of philanthropic success within the campaign and beyond, ensuring the Wisconsin Medicine team is a fully integrated and highly collaborative contributor to the larger university-wide foundation.

The VP/MGL will report directly to Senior Vice President of Development (SVP) Kyle Buchmann as part of the WFAA executive management team, and partner closely with CEO of UW Health [Dr. Alan Kaplan](#), as well as incoming Dean of SMPH, [Dr. Nita Ahuja](#). The VP/MGL will serve as a trusted philanthropic advisor to Drs. Kaplan and Ahuja and members of their respective senior leadership teams, building and broadcasting a clear strategic vision for Wisconsin Medicine philanthropy that engages key academic, research, and clinical partners in the fundraising and engagement process. Historically, Wisconsin Medicine has benefitted from close, collaborative relationships between these leaders and entities.

Together, they will work with the VP/MGL to define strategic priorities for Wisconsin Medicine and promote a culture of philanthropy within its community of grateful patients and families, alumni, donors, staff members, and friends.

The VP/MGL must possess the strategic vision to create and implement an overarching aspirational plan for the future of Wisconsin Medicine grounded in sound data analytics and a robust infrastructure. This leader will take a holistic and comprehensive approach, leveraging all levels and functions of the medical advancement enterprise from annual to principal gifts and advancement marketing and communications, events, and stewardship, as well as WFAA resources and partnerships. The VP/MGL will be an accomplished and high-performing leader capable of building trust and generating excitement among the enterprise's external and internal constituencies, and of galvanizing philanthropic investment at principal and transformational levels. Additionally, the next VP/MGL will contribute to strengthening a unique and cohesive brand for Wisconsin Medicine, in part through increased visibility and positioning of key leaders, and clarity and consistency of messaging. The VP/MGL will lead team efforts around enhanced data reporting in order to more fully unlock the enormous potential in untracked patients. These efforts will expand the pipeline of support for the next comprehensive campaign and beyond. At the highest levels, the VP/MGL must also partner with university leaders and WFAA colleagues to leverage the university's longtime success in interdisciplinary research to fund big ideas that align Wisconsin Medicine synergistically with the rest of UW–Madison.

Effective collaboration and team leadership within the foundation will be critical to the VP/MGL's success. By forging strong partnerships with peer colleagues and leadership in WFAA, the VP/MGL will strengthen the advancement integration of Wisconsin Medicine and the foundation at large, while introducing bold innovations and educating others on the unique nature of medical advancement and its donor base. The VP/MGL will directly lead a talented and deeply committed medical advancement team of 33 professionals who are nimble and eager to raise sights. Tenures on the team far exceed industry standards due in large part to a positive work culture, passion for medical fundraising, and a focus on professional growth opportunities. The VP/MGL will advocate for staff and motivate them to continue exceeding goals, fostering virtues of teamwork, excellence, and consistent collaboration in support of a unified, overarching vision for medical advancement.

The ideal candidate will be a seasoned fundraising professional with a demonstrated growth mindset and at least ten years of development leadership experience, preferably in a large and complex research university or academic medical center environment. The successful candidate will be an experienced leader adept at motivating and empowering staff, as well as facilitating cohesion and team success. The VP/MGL must demonstrate the credibility, sophistication, and emotional intelligence necessary to serve as a partner to executive leaders and effectively engage broad internal and external constituencies. Utilizing exceptional skills in communication and diplomacy, the VP/MGL must build bridges with all members of a complex, matrixed enterprise that includes a university, foundation, and health system. The successful candidate will also possess a strong track record of personal fundraising success at major and principal gift levels. Importantly, the VP/MGL must effectively articulate and embody the mission and

goals of an outstanding comprehensive research university, and demonstrate a commitment to advancing the vision of a premier academic medical center.

WFAA has retained Rachel Ellenport and Grace Zakim of the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in conducting this important recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document and will be held in the strictest confidence.

WISCONSIN FOUNDATION AND ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The University of Wisconsin Foundation (the foundation) is the official fundraising and gift-receiving organization for the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The foundation is the university’s development and financial partner. Established in 1945, the foundation was created and is governed by a board of UW–Madison alumni and donors. In 2014, the UWF merged with the Wisconsin Alumni Association to better serve a growing population of UW alumni and donors, creating the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association (WFAA).

Fiscal Year 2023-2024 was WFAA’s second-best fundraising year in history, closing with \$529.6 million in new gifts and pledges. At year-end, the endowment stood at \$4.3 billion. The most recent WFAA comprehensive campaign, [All Ways Forward](#) closed in 2021 and raised \$4.2 billion from 265,000 donors. Planning is underway for the next comprehensive campaign scheduled to publicly launch in late 2026.

The Campaign for Wisconsin Medicine: *The Future Needs Us Now*

Wisconsin Medicine publicly launched [The Future Needs Us Now](#) campaign in 2022 with three main pillars for support: patient care, research, and education. The campaign has exceeded its goal of \$500 million ahead of the December 2025 scheduled conclusion.

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) is recognized as an international leader in education, research, and service. Founded in 1907, it transformed into the nation’s first school of medicine and public health in 2005 to integrate the principles and value of interwoven medical and public health approaches in all its missions. With more than 5,500 employees, including over 2,000 faculty members, the school’s engagement spans the entire state of Wisconsin and includes a deep commitment to improving population health. This commitment manifests itself in innovative models that serve as paradigms for the rest of the country.

Members of the school translate discovery into application and continually foster synergies among public health, community engagement, clinical care, education, and research. Consistently ranked among the nation’s top medical schools, the school has established high-performance academic programs that are distributed across the entire spectrum of academic medicine. The school trains students in five health

professions degrees and programs — Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Physical Therapy, Master of Genetic Counselor Studies, Master of Physician Assistant Studies, and Master of Public Health — and is home to more than 20 doctoral and master’s programs across biomedical and health sciences as well as exceptional post-doctoral training programs. Its faculty members hold appointments in 27 departments — 17 in the clinical sciences and 10 in the basic sciences. The faculty is composed of some of the nation’s leading researchers, educators, and clinicians. This includes several recipients of the National Medal of Science and Nobel Prize, as well as members of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.

The Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA), founded in 1956, is dedicated to serving the school and its network of more than 8,000 medical alumni and students. In 2020, WMAA dissolved its non-stock Wisconsin corporation status (501c3) and reestablished WMAA as an advisory body within SMPH, with its traditional mission and structure intact.

UW HEALTH

UW Health is the integrated health system of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It is the primary teaching affiliate of SMPH and the Schools of Nursing and Pharmacy. University Hospital is a 614-bed academic regional referral center with 127 outpatient clinics and a designated Level 1 adult and pediatric trauma center, only one of two in Wisconsin. UW Health is home to the [University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center](#), one of the 40 National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers. UW Health also operates the [American Family Children’s Hospital](#), a 110-bed pediatric hospital adjacent to University Hospital, as well as UW Health East Madison Hospital, an 83-bed hospital and emergency room located on the Northeast Side of Madison. UW Health Hospitals has been ranked #1 in Wisconsin 13 years in a row by *U.S. News and World Report*, serving more than 800,000 patients each year in the upper Midwest and beyond. With more than 1,800 physicians and 24,000 staff, UW Health is the second largest employer in Wisconsin.

Please visit the addendum of this document for additional information on WFAA, UW Health, and SMPH leadership.

ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND MANAGING GROUP LEADER FOR WISCONSIN MEDICINE

The VP/MGL will serve as a key member of the WFAA executive management team and oversee all medical advancement programs. Reporting directly to the SVP for Development and partnering closely with the CEO of UW Health and Dean of SMPH, the VP/MGL will direct a 33-person staff. As WFAA plans for an ambitious comprehensive campaign, the VP/MGL will guide Wisconsin Medicine through the next phase of growth, further integrating the medical advancement program with WFAA, while building and implementing a comprehensive fundraising plan that includes expanding the grateful patient program, enhancing transformational gift opportunities, and defining distinct messaging and fundraising priorities for Wisconsin Medicine in partnership with leadership.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VP/MGL

Develop and Implement a Strategic Vision for Wisconsin Medicine

- Assess the effectiveness and fundraising potential of the WFAA medical advancement program; serve as architect and builder of a strategic advancement operation that will broaden and strengthen medical advancement's outreach efforts to alumni, grateful patients, the community, and beyond, providing philanthropic support that is sustainable, impactful, and in keeping with the institution's core values and mission.
- Articulate and continue to refine a clear and compelling institutional case for support that connects with a variety of audiences, highlighting both the need for and importance of Wisconsin Medicine in the local community and beyond; inspire, challenge, and raise philanthropic sights of the UW communities to meet significant annual fundraising goals.
- Manage and lead all aspects of Wisconsin Medicine's component of WFAA's upcoming comprehensive campaign.

Leadership Support and Engagement

- Lead efforts to strengthen and expand senior, academic, and clinical leadership engagement, providing the necessary resources and tools to leverage philanthropic opportunities and communicate effectively with donor audiences, representing the full range of specialties and research endeavors across Wisconsin Medicine.
- Cultivate strong working relationships with academic, medical, and philanthropic leaders across UW Health, SMPH, WFAA, and UW-Madison at large. Make the case to deans and other leaders across campus to engage in enhanced partnership and collaboration with Wisconsin Medicine; ensure that the medical advancement team is seen as a collaborative, accessible, proactive, and trustworthy partner capable of professionally addressing opportunities, concerns, and new ideas.
- Serve as a collaborative member of the SVP's senior leadership team, further integrating into WFAA and playing a key role in priority setting and decision making.

Fundraising and Donor Cultivation

- Lead the development, growth, and implementation of best-in-class principal, major, planned, and annual giving programs using fundraising best practices and strengthening a robust and sustainable grateful patient and family fundraising program.
- Direct a high-performing, donor-centric transformational giving program, employing critical thinking and creative strategies aligned with Wisconsin Medicine's fundraising priorities and university-wide "big ideas" to aggressively advance fundraising outcomes.
- In close collaboration with senior leaders and physician partners, develop a unified strategy to maintain alliances with current donors while launching systematic initiatives to identify and cultivate an expanded principal and transformational donor pipeline.

- Serve as a key institutional liaison and strategist for high-capacity donors – independently or in collaboration with the appropriate foundation colleagues, as the situation requires – personally cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding a portfolio of principal and transformational prospects and donors.
- Build collaborative partnerships with colleagues in WFAA to strengthen the connection between medical and university fundraising efforts; increase cross-campus interdisciplinary giving opportunities.

Management and Leadership

- Lead, support, and mentor a committed and productive staff of 33 promoting and perpetuating a culture of excellence, collaboration, and professional growth. Further develop a high-caliber team that is well prepared to meet the ongoing challenges and aspirations of Wisconsin Medicine, setting clear direction and priorities through well-defined and measurable goals and placing staff members' work within the context of the organization's mission and strategic priorities.
- Nurture a culture of transparency and communication. Ensure that all staff members have a common commitment to advancing Wisconsin Medicine and its priorities.
- Maintain a leadership style that is open and fluid; foster a welcoming and inclusive work environment that recognizes and rewards performance, supports new ideas and risk-taking, builds confidence, and encourages teamwork.
- Advocate for resources to adequately staff and support an ambitious strategy for Wisconsin Medicine and compellingly articulate the return on investment.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- A deep appreciation for the history and achievements of Wisconsin Medicine, as well as the aspirations and importance of WFAA, and the ability to effectively articulate institutional mission, relevance, and excellence to a broad audience.
- A minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible development leadership experience in a complex, matrixed environment, ideally including significant experience working in healthcare or academic medicine; experience serving on a senior leadership team and contributing at the strategic level; depth of knowledge of best practices in all key areas of development, including campaign planning and implementation.
- Demonstrated ability and experience building upon an existing development program, resulting in a transformative increase in philanthropic revenue for an organization. Success increasing the effectiveness of a development program and its staff through established objectives, retention, and performance standards.
- The political savvy and executive presence to effectively navigate a complex foundation, academic medical, and university community, including leveraging the time and talents of senior leaders; the natural inclination and ability to build bridges and strong collaborative relationships across an organization with wide-ranging constituencies to maximize philanthropic potential.

- Proven management skills in establishing a team- and goal-oriented environment that empowers staff through active communication and delegation and that builds confidence, promotes diversity of thought, and celebrates achievements. An approach to management that leads by example, bringing out the best in staff and yielding pride, ownership, and a sense of team effort.
- Demonstrated success in personally cultivating, soliciting, securing, and stewarding principal gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations. A track record of raising funds to support mission-critical goals.
- Ingenuity and creative problem-solving skills with strong critical thinking and analytic abilities; data-driven decision maker; impeccable attention to detail with superb follow-through; naturally curious and able to recognize connections and opportunities.
- The credibility, emotional intelligence, and sound judgment required to effectively engage and leverage the institution's leaders and volunteers in the cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of key prospects and donors.
- The ability to thrive in a fast-paced environment by efficiently managing multiple tasks and competing priorities simultaneously while consistently meeting high performance standards and exceeding expectations.
- Exemplary interpersonal communication skills; superior written and oral communication skills, including translating scientific content for a lay audience; confident, assured public speaker.
- Decisive, with a proven ability to translate ideas into action, take thoughtful risks, and achieve short- and long-term results; ability to adapt to and lead through ambiguity with a high degree of autonomy and responsibility; persuasive, persistent, and determined.
- A track record of success leading fundraising efforts for basic and translational science as well as from grateful patients, including knowledge of HIPAA and its requirements for development activities; discretion with donor and prospect information.
- A sharp eye for operational efficiencies and optimal use of budgetary resources.
- A high degree of integrity, character, and emotional maturity, demonstrating respect for individuals at every level of an organization.
- Bachelor's degree required.

LOCATION

Located on an isthmus between two lakes, Madison is the capital city of the state of Wisconsin. Madison's technology economy is growing rapidly, and the region is home to the headquarters of Epic Systems, Exact Sciences, American Family Insurance, Sub-Zero, and Lands' End, as well as many biotech, healthcare IT, and health systems startups. Madison is the second largest city in the state, with a city population of approximately 260,000 and a regional population of over 1 million. The city is within easy driving range of Chicago and Milwaukee.

The city has a dedicated athletics fanbase that centers around the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Sports venues include Camp Randall Stadium, the Kohl Center, LaBahn Arena, Wisconsin Field House, and

the Alliant Energy Center. Madison is home to one of the strongest local food scenes in the country, with several James Beard Award winners, gastropubs, and farm-to-table restaurants. The city is rich with cultural offerings such as the Overture Center for the Performing Arts, Orpheum Theatre, Concerts on the Square, Jazz at Five, UW–Madison Mead Witter School of Music and Hamel Music Center, Madison Symphony Orchestra, Madison Opera, Madison Ballet, UW–Madison Chazen Museum of Art, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin Historical Museum and Madison Children’s Museum, among others.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website below. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-wisconsin-foundation-and-alumni-association/vice-president-and-managing>

Rachel Ellenport, Partner
Grace Zakim, Managing Associate
Maureen Perry, Associate
Megan Gorman, Managing Search Coordinator

*The Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association is an Equal Opportunity Employer *The Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association is the “doing business as” name of the merged organization comprising the University of Wisconsin Foundation (supportuw.org) and the Wisconsin Alumni Association (uwalumni.com). Its legal corporate name is registered as the University of Wisconsin Foundation.*

ADDENDUM: LEADERSHIP

Alan Kaplan, MD **CEO, UW Health**

Dr. Kaplan serves as CEO of UW Health, a multi-state academic health system affiliated with the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and comprised of six main hospitals in Wisconsin and Illinois, and more than 1,800 faculty physicians and 24,000 total employees providing care to more than 800,000 patients annually.

Kaplan is best characterized as a builder of innovative, transformational, and long-lasting partnerships. In his current role he led the post-merger integration of the hospital system and the faculty physician group practice, facilitated a financially integrated Joint Operating Agreement (JOA) with a non-owned community hospital and expanded a provider-owned health plan by offering equal governance to regional health systems. In a prior role, Kaplan led a three-state medical practice merger leading to a unified 1,000+ provider medical group.

Kaplan's leadership through the turbulent pandemic era positioned UW Health for continued growth through strong fiscal management, innovative workforce strategies and a forward-looking approach to diversity and health equity. In 2023, UW Health launched a first-of-its-kind nurse apprenticeship program to expand the number of nurse graduates while providing opportunity for individuals from historically marginalized communities.

Kaplan maintains a strong focus on patient care and serving the academic mission. This focus was evident in the recent opening of a new 480,000 sq. ft. outpatient facility that offers coordinated, multi-disciplinary care, ground-breaking cancer treatment technologies, integrated specialized care for women and increased access to clinical trials.

Prior to his current role, Kaplan served in senior executive leadership roles at UnityPoint Health in Des Moines, IA and Edward Hospital in Naperville, IL. Kaplan earned his medical degree from Rush University, is residency trained in emergency medicine, and earned a Master of Medical Management degree from Carnegie Mellon University.

Nita Ahuja, MD, MBA **Incoming Dean and Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health**

The University of Wisconsin–Madison has selected Dr. Nita Ahuja, MD, MBA, to serve as the next dean of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and the university's next vice chancellor for medical affairs, effective May 15, 2025.

Ahuja comes to the University of Wisconsin–Madison from Yale University where she currently serves as the William H. Carmalt Professor of Surgery and chair of the Department of Surgery, the first woman to

do so in the department's history. Ahuja has been a member of Yale's faculty since 2018 and previously served as a faculty member at Johns Hopkins for 15 years. She is also a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine, among several other academic and healthcare societies.

At Yale University, Ahuja has served as Chair of the Yale Medicine Faculty Practice Plan, Associate Cancer Center Director of Yale Cancer Center's Surgical Services, Chief of Surgery at Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH), and Surgeon-in-Chief for the Yale New Haven Health System, where she oversaw 85 operating rooms across seven hospitals.

Ahuja has deep experience working in cancer care and research with a passion for interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to medicine. She specializes in the treatment of sarcomas and complex gastrointestinal cancers and pioneering innovative surgical and heated chemotherapy approaches. Since 2003, she has led a translational science laboratory focused on the development of biomarkers for early detection of pancreatic and colorectal cancers using genetic information from patient samples.

Ahuja received her medical degree from Duke University School of Medicine in 1993 and completed her residency in general surgery and fellowship in surgical oncology at Johns Hopkins.

Kyle Buchmann

Senior Vice President of Development, Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association

Kyle Buchmann joined the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association as Director of Development for Corporate and Foundation Relations in 2012. From 2018 to 2024, he led the College of Engineering development team before being promoted to Senior Vice President. In this role, Buchmann co-leads the division, oversees the Athletics, Engineering, Nursing, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine, Wisconsin Medicine, and cross campus initiatives fundraising teams, and focuses on excellence in development operations, prospect management, and training.

Previously Buchmann was the Associate Director for Major Gifts at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and spent a number of years as the Director of Tournaments and Championships for Collegiate Club Sports in Pittsburgh, PA. Buchmann received his BBA degree and leadership Certificate from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.