



Chief Advancement Officer, Mellon College of Science
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

THE SEARCH

Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) seeks a seasoned and inspirational fundraising professional to serve as the next chief advancement officer (CAO) of the Mellon College of Science (MCS). Joining Dean Barbara Shinn-Cunningham at the outset of her tenure and serving as an integral member of the dean's senior management team, the CAO will provide bold strategic vision, leadership, and direction for all fundraising, alumni engagement, and stewardship activities for MCS during an exciting time of growth and change at CMU. This is a unique opportunity for a proven development professional to partner with a dynamic and energetic dean to garner the critical resources necessary to further advance and deliver on the college's mission.

Reporting to Dr. Shinn-Cunningham, Glen de Vries Dean at the [Mellon College of Science](#), with a dotted line report to the associate vice president for development, the CAO will join the university as they conclude their record-breaking *Make Possible* campaign on June 30, 2025. The CAO will develop and refine the overall strategy and fundraising priorities for development at MCS in conjunction with University Advancement colleagues. The CAO will benefit from Dean Shinn-Cunningham's commitment to development-related activities and serve as her chief strategist on all fundraising matters. The CAO will bring a thoughtful, proactive, collaborative, and entrepreneurial approach to leveraging MCS's existing relationships and to positioning the dean to connect with philanthropists, entrepreneurs, alumni and business leaders who may not yet be engaged with the college. The CAO will be active and visible on campus and in the greater community, and will possess a deep appreciation for, and ability to clearly articulate, the role and importance of a research university as well as the achievements and aspirations of MCS to a broad and diverse audience.

The CAO will provide leadership and management for the vision, direction, planning, and execution of fundraising and alumni relations activities for the college. The CAO will inherit a high-performing team specializing in individual gifts, corporate, foundation, and government relations. The CAO will lead by

example by carrying a personal portfolio of major gift prospects. The CAO will lead the team to launch systematic initiatives to identify and cultivate the next generation of donors while maintaining and strengthening ties to existing donors and seeking out new philanthropic opportunities.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a high-performing, energetic, collaborative, imaginative, well-organized, and accomplished leader to further elevate MCS' development program through the implementation of best practices, team and capacity building, calculated risk-taking, and the application of data-driven strategies that will create a philanthropic enterprise of unsurpassed effectiveness. The ideal candidate must be a self-starter who operates with a sense of urgency and thinks strategically, analytically, and entrepreneurially, with an ability to transform new ideas into executable and enduring programs. With at least 10 years of leadership experience in successful development operations, preferably in complex research university environments, the ideal candidate must possess strong strategic planning, managerial, and motivational skills; a keen understanding of best practices in fundraising and a comprehensive knowledge of all major development functions, including a depth of campaign experience; and a track record of significant personal success in donor cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship at major and principal gift levels. The ideal candidate will have proven success leading development staff through the process of setting and achieving annual and long-range fundraising goals to support campaign priorities. The ideal candidate will be a seasoned team leader adept at maximizing, leveraging, and advocating for a talented staff, and facilitating team success.

The CAO must possess high levels of integrity, credibility, and drive; be good-natured, flexible, and open-minded; and be able to adapt in a dynamic environment. The ideal candidate must possess a demonstrated commitment to the highest ethical standards and exhibit the credibility, maturity, and sophistication to effectively engage and partner with key internal and external stakeholders. The candidate must possess very well-developed interpersonal and negotiation skills, and the desire and ability to build bridges and strong collaborative relationships with all members of an operation across a university, ideally approaching their work with enthusiasm and a sense of humor. A bachelor's degree is required.

Carnegie Mellon University has retained Mr. Jack Gorman of the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller, to assist in conducting this search. 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.

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

A member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), [Carnegie Mellon University](#) is a global, research-intensive university with more than 16,700 students, 6,300 faculty and staff, and more than 118,000 living alumni. Since its founding in 1900, the University has been a birthplace of innovation. Its award-winning faculty members are renowned for inspiring students to think ambitiously and creatively, to interpret with insight, and to solve major scientific, technological, and societal challenges. As a result, its students are recruited by some of the most forward-thinking organizations throughout the world. The University has embraced a deep commitment to solving problems through collaborative integration of

multiple perspectives and disciplines, with an emphasis on creativity, innovation, and the human element, to enable pervasive and sustainable societal impact.

Seven schools and colleges comprise the University: College of Engineering, College of Fine Arts, Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy, Mellon College of Science, School of Computer Science, and the Tepper School of Business. CMU has its main, 157-acre campus in Pittsburgh, satellite campuses in Silicon Valley, Doha, Qatar, and Kigali, Rwanda, and degree-granting programs domestically (including Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, DC) and around the world (including Japan, Portugal, and Latin America).

Carnegie Mellon has been home to 20 Nobel Laureates, 26 members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 68 members of the National Academy of Engineering, 22 members of the National Academy of Sciences, six members of the National Academy of Medicine, one member of the National Academy of Public Administration, 13 Turing Award recipients, 22 Guggenheim Fellows, two MacArthur Foundation Fellows, one National Book Award winner, two National Medal of Science winners, and six National Medal of Technology and Innovation winners. Former faculty and alumni have won 13 Academy Awards, 142 Emmy Awards, and 52 Tony Awards.

Carnegie Mellon University is ranked by U.S. News and World Report among the top 25 national universities and top five most innovative universities. In addition, many CMU schools and departments are ranked within the top 25 according to U.S. News and World Report: undergraduate business programs (#7), undergraduate engineering programs (#8), undergraduate computer science (#2); graduate business (#18 for full-time and #9 for part-time), graduate engineering (#5); mathematics (#20); computer science (#4); statistics (#5); fine arts (#7); economics (#21); public affairs (#19); and psychology (#23).

CMU puts a strong emphasis on creativity – from art to robots to policy – to address cultural imperatives and enrich lives. It is a global leader in taking ground-breaking ideas quickly to market and in creating successful entrepreneurial ventures. Known for its innovative culture, CMU has launched more than 130 companies. It ranks first among U.S. universities without a medical school in the number of start-up companies created per research dollar spent since 2007. In addition, CMU spinoffs represent more than a third of the total companies created in Pennsylvania based on University technologies in recent years. Altogether, CMU has helped to greenlight more than 1,000 companies, creating jobs across the U.S. and internationally. In early 2011, the World Economic Forum invited CMU to become a permanent member of its Global University Leaders Forum. Business members of the Forum include the world's top 1,000 companies, which drive the economy forward and collaborate on shaping global, regional, and industry agendas. CMU is one of only 29 universities in the world – and one of 12 universities in the U.S. – to be invited to join.

Carnegie Mellon was founded on the principle of education as a force to enhance careers, lives, and communities. Teaching and learning remain core to the mission, and faculty and students jointly work on projects and activities with broader real-world meaning. The curriculum is infused with opportunities for students to be engaged in formal and informal research, in project courses designed for interdisciplinary

problem solving, and in learning opportunities in and out of the classroom, lab, studio, and stage. Students at Carnegie Mellon embrace this multi-faceted learning environment, living the oft-quoted words of Andrew Carnegie, "My heart is in the work."

Mellon College of Science

The Mellon College of Science's mission is three-fold: to harness the remarkable research strengths and collaborative culture at CMU to support foundational discovery and solve issues of global significance; to provide students with a rigorous education that provides in-depth skills within their discipline, exposure to a breadth of scientific fields, and the knowledge and ability to identify and address significant and challenging problems; and to tell the world about the collaborative scientific and educational culture of CMU and how it harnesses this productive culture to achieve transformational results. MCS operationalizes its mission every day through its commitment to integrated research and education that has solidified its stellar reputation.

MCS hosts many programs and research centers that cross disciplines and is home to the Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center and four departments — biological sciences, chemistry, mathematical sciences, and physics. The College also offers interdisciplinary degrees and programs across CMU with the Tepper School of Business, the School of Computer Science, the Heinz College of Information Systems and Public Policy, and the Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences. MCS's highly competitive programs empower the next generation of leaders and discoverers through unsurpassed education in a uniquely collaborative community.

The Mellon College of Science's four departments have risen in U.S. News & World Report graduate program rankings over the last 12 years. In 2023, the Biological Sciences were ranked 37th, Chemistry 38th, Mathematical Sciences 20th, and Physics 28th. Additionally, the Department of Mathematical Sciences is ranked 3rd in Discrete Mathematics and 10th in Applied Mathematics by U.S. News & World Report. In 2022, Gizmodo recognized the Department of Physics as one of the top programs in astronomy and astrophysics. The Master of Science in Computational Finance program is fourth in Quantnet's ranking of best financial engineering programs.

MCS is committed to providing students with a rigorous, supportive academic and research environment. MCS is home to 879 undergraduate, 151 master's, and 275 PhD students. An MCS education prepares graduates to thrive in the 21st-century scientific and social world they will face and shape. MCS's innovative core curriculum considers holistic development and fosters student growth in four dimensions—scholar, professional, citizen, and person—to give students a multi-dimensional undergraduate experience.

MCS is leading programs aimed at attracting promising young scholars. Students have abundant opportunities to enrich their experiences by participating in thoughtful programs such as the Summer Undergraduate Applied Mathematics Institute, and Summer Academy for Math and Sciences. Undergraduate students can also participate in the Data Analytics for Science Immersion Experience

(DASIE). The DASIE program is executed through partnerships with Dow Chemical and Accenture and is designed to bring together students from outside of CMU to build a pipeline of future science leaders with advanced data skills.

The Mellon College of Science is renowned for nurturing and producing innovators and forward-thinkers. MCS has been home to 10 of the University's 20 Nobel Laureates, including John Nash Jr., who earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics in 1948 and won the Nobel Prize in Economic Science in 1994. MCS alumni and faculty have invented materials and processes that have made a profound impact, such as Kevlar® and CyDyes™. A new automated science lab is fostering an environment where science is accessible, reliable, and limited only by ideas.

MCS will continue to play a leading role in the University's ambitious [future of science initiative](#). The decade-long initiative will revolutionize the future of science, accelerate the University's leadership in scientific discovery and education, and lead to groundbreaking innovations that will benefit all of humankind. Carnegie Mellon University is committed to remaining on the cutting edge of science and has devoted more than \$250 million to the initiative. MCS has and will continue to be a launch pad for new inventions, inspired thinking, and investment. The Mellon College of Science represents a fertile space where ideas and new creations can take root and grow. MCS is playing a leading role in educational and research partnerships such as the CMU Cloud Lab, the [Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center](#), the Neuroscience Institute, and new, collaborative space in [Richard King Mellon Hall of Sciences](#).

UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

[University Advancement](#) supports Carnegie Mellon University's incredible growth and momentum and the vision of having a transformative impact on society through continual innovation in education, research, creativity, and entrepreneurship. The division provides leadership, partnership, and coordination for advancement and alumni relations staff, collaborating with other offices, colleges, schools, and departments across the University. Advancement colleagues help articulate and highlight CMU's distinctive excellence and broad and deep impact on the world by building relationships with its various constituencies, providing leadership for events – including most university-level events – and securing critical industry sponsorship and private philanthropic support.

Carnegie Mellon is enjoying its most productive fundraising years in its history, surpassing the initial fundraising goal for its \$2 billion [Make Possible](#) campaign more than 18 months ahead of schedule. Due to the momentum of the campaign, it is now slated to continue until June 2025, culminating in the celebration of the university's 125th anniversary. With its world-leading strengths at the intersection of technology and humanity, CMU research, innovation, and creativity will help shape the 21st century.

ACADEMIC AND ADVANCEMENT LEADERSHIP

Barbara Shinn-Cunningham is the Glen de Vries Dean of Mellon College of Science at Carnegie Mellon University. She joined Carnegie Mellon University in 2018 as the founding director of the Neuroscience Institute. She also holds courtesy appointments in Psychology, Biomedical Engineering, and Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Before joining CMU, Shinn-Cunningham spent 21 years on the faculty of Boston University. Her research combines behavioral, neuroimaging, and computational methods to understand how the brain processes sound. An author of more than 200 scientific articles, she is recognized for her expertise in spatial hearing, auditory attention and sensory hearing deficits. She has degrees in electrical engineering from Brown University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She has received honors from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Whitaker Foundation and the Vannevar Bush Fellows program.

Shinn-Cunningham is the president of the Acoustical Society of America (ASA), and in 2019, she accepted its Helmholtz-Rayleigh Interdisciplinary Silver Medal in Psychological and Physiological Acoustics, Speech Communication, and Architectural Acoustics. She previously served as the treasurer/secretary of the Association for Research in Otolaryngology. Her mentorship has been recognized by awards from both the ASA and the Society for Neuroscience. She is a Fellow of the ASA, a Fellow of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering, and a lifetime member of the National Research Council. She serves as a senior editor for eLife.

Pamela Eager is the Senior Associate Vice President for University Advancement at Carnegie Mellon. Her responsibilities include oversight of principal gifts fundraising, individual giving programs, college and unit development programs and leading the foundation relations and strategic philanthropic initiatives programs. Since joining the university in 1991, Pam has served in a number of roles including Interim Vice President for University Advancement, Director of Development for the College of Engineering, Director of Major Gifts, Assistant Vice President for Individual Giving, and Senior Associate Vice President for Development. Prior to joining the staff at CMU, Pam worked at BASF Corporation, an international chemicals producer, in market development, product management, and corporate strategic planning. Pam holds a B.S in chemical engineering and an M.B.A. both from Carnegie Mellon.

ROLE OF THE CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

The CAO will craft a multiyear development strategy that will ensure sustainable, long-term growth in philanthropic contributions; collaborate with the dean, department heads, and faculty members to articulate the funding priorities and aspirations of MCS to key colleagues within University Advancement and to potential individual and institutional donors; travel to visit prospects, often in tandem with the dean and other key academic partners; and work proactively to bring potential donors to campus for substantive visits and engagements. The CAO will directly manage a staff of six (with two direct reports).

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Strategic Vision and Fundraising Leadership

- Serve as architect and leader of a strategic, cohesive, and systematic development program to broaden fundraising, outreach, and membership activities, and increase philanthropic revenue year-over-year.
- Assess MCS's fundraising potential and craft a sophisticated multi-year fundraising and engagement strategy that will result in sustainable long-term growth in philanthropic contributions.
- In partnership with the dean, identify compelling funding priorities and match them with existing and prospective donors' interests.
- Personally cultivate, solicit, and steward a select prospect and donor portfolio. Lead the frontline fundraising team by example, demonstrating success and ensuring that timely steps are taken toward solicitation.
- Develop and deploy a strategic and forward-thinking operating model that utilizes and is enabled by metrics, data, and development benchmarking with an eye toward best practices.

Executive Engagement

- Guide and support the Dean in her role as chief spokesperson and fundraiser, serving as an advisor and co-strategist in cultivating prospective donors and soliciting transformational gifts. Similarly, guide and support senior leaders, volunteers, and other key constituents in all development-related activities, ensuring that their time spent is productive, meaningful, and personally rewarding.
- Serve as an active and contributing member of the Dean's senior management team. Build collaborative professional relationships with peers and foster a strong team orientation. Work with a broad range of diverse individuals and groups to achieve shared goals.
- Partner with the Dean to set the strategy for recruiting and engaging the college's Advocacy Council, which is comprised of alumni and corporate leaders.
- Participate in college-wide strategic planning efforts and contribute to discussions that guide strategies and policies shaping MCS's future.

Team Leadership and Management

- Lead, support, and mentor MCS's development staff of six (two direct reports). Promote a culture of excellence, collaboration, and professional growth, and further develop a high-caliber staff that is well prepared to meet the ongoing challenges and opportunities of an ambitious program.

- Oversee development staff activities, including hiring, training, job description definition, and performance review processes for the team. Enhance professional development, career planning, and employee wellness opportunities for development staff. Recruit and retain top talent, further establishing and cementing CMU as a broadly viewed employer of choice.
- Set clear direction, priorities, and measurable goals for the MCS development team. Assess current staff effectiveness and overall organizational structure; create and nurture a culture of transparency, communication, and collaboration. Ensure that all staff members have a common commitment to advancing MCS and its priorities.
- Maintain a leadership style that is fair, equitable, open, and inspiring, empowering, and motivating to staff. Foster a work environment that recognizes and rewards performance, supports new ideas and risk-taking, builds confidence, encourages interaction and teamwork, and reduces silos. Serve as an advocate for staff, representing their needs and concerns.

Collaboration with University Advancement

- Lead MCS's coordination with University Advancement at Carnegie Mellon. Participate in the overall execution of a comprehensive development program and related campaign activities.
- Seek and leverage opportunities to build cross-college relationships where these benefit MCS and its constituents.
- Participate in University Advancement's Advancement Leadership Council.
- Ensure alignment and continuity with University-wide activities that enable and fund the larger mission of the University.
- Cultivate a positive image of MCS and its capabilities and impact to its various constituencies.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one candidate will meet all desired criteria, the successful candidate will bring most of the following qualifications and attributes.

- A minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience envisioning, developing, and implementing a successful and comprehensive development program in a fast-paced environment. Depth of knowledge of best practices in all key areas of development, including demonstrated ability to manage and close a comprehensive campaign.
- Strong planning and analytical skills, as well as proven experience in developing and effectively implementing an organization-wide development plan.
- Results-driven with personal experience cultivating seven-figure gifts, including supporting donor strategies, solicitation approaches, and donor stewardship.
- A range of experience from a variety of sources, including major gifts, corporate and foundation giving, and planned giving, with a track record of results across all areas.

- Deep understanding of resource management in terms of time, effort, budget, and funding, and evidence of strategic direction making in the allocation and tracking of resources.
- Experience as an influential leader and manager, with a proven track record of strong hiring, team development, and career progression and promotion.
- Demonstrated history of implementing new ways of thinking and engagement while thinking strategically and tactically.
- A data-driven approach and the ability to articulate metrics in broadly accessible terms.
- Success working closely with and building collaborative relationships with senior leadership peers, board members, and staff at all levels.
- The credibility, maturity, and sound judgment required to effectively engage and leverage MCS's leadership and volunteers in the cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of key prospects and donors, including high-net-worth individuals and business leaders.
- Strong personal integrity and work ethic, as well as a sense of humor and perspective.
- Bachelor's degree required; a master's degree is preferred.

SALARY, BENEFITS, AND LOCATION

Carnegie Mellon University offers a competitive salary and a wide variety of benefits and programs designed to meet the needs of its faculty and staff members. From its health and welfare plan offerings to tuition benefits and competitive retirement plans, CMU is committed to providing benefits that support its staff through every stage of their career at CMU. You may learn more about CMU benefits [here](#).

Carnegie Mellon University isn't just one of the world's most renowned educational institutions — it is also a hotspot for some of the most talented doers, dreamers, and difference-makers on the planet. No matter what your role or location, you will connect and collaborate with dedicated, passionate colleagues, and you will have the satisfaction of delivering work that truly matters.

Forbes annually ranks Carnegie Mellon University as one of the best employers in Pennsylvania. The list is compiled by anonymously surveying 80,000 Americans working for businesses with at least 500 employees to pinpoint the organizations liked best by employees. Respondents are asked to anonymously rate their employers on a variety of criteria and indicate how likely they'd be to recommend their employer to others.

Pittsburgh is in the midst of a remarkable transformation from an industrial capital to a center of education, medical research, and new technology. The city hosts a high concentration of diverse and influential nonprofits and, as an international center of emerging information technology, is home to many small start-up companies, one of Google's national offices, Facebook's Oculus virtual reality research center, and Aurora Innovation's autonomous vehicles development effort. Pittsburgh is also emerging as a leader in advanced manufacturing technologies and nanotechnology. While still a work in

progress, the city's reinvention of itself has garnered widespread attention and has become a model for other cities seeking to replicate its success.

Pittsburgh has all of the advantages of a large city in combination with the friendliness of the Midwest and the cultural sophistication of the East Coast. In 2022, U.S. News & World Report rated Pittsburgh among the [best places to live in the U.S.](#) The city boasts a wonderful array of distinctive neighborhoods and an abundance of residential choices ranging from unique lofts to living in the "country" while being only 20 minutes from the city. Housing is affordable and, as noted by Forbes, presents the second most stable housing market in the country. The city and its surrounding suburbs take pride in high-quality public, private, and parochial schools. Statistically, Pittsburgh is a safe city compared to other urban communities of its size. No longer a smoky steel town, Pittsburgh is clean and green and a model for its efforts to become pollution-free.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/carnegie-mellon-university-mellon-college-science/chief-advancement-officer>

Jack Gorman, Partner
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