



Executive Director
Zamorano University Foundation
San Antonio de Oriente, Francisco Morazán, Honduras
(Remote US-Based Position)

THE SEARCH

The Zamorano University Foundation (ZUF) seeks an accomplished and entrepreneurial fundraising professional to serve as the inaugural Executive Director. Incorporated in the United States in 2025, the Zamorano University Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the mission of Honduras' renowned Zamorano University by inspiring philanthropic support from new sources in the United States. The Executive Director will serve as the Foundation's chief executive officer and lead fundraiser.

Founded more than 80 years ago, Zamorano University's teaching, research, and community programs are focused on sustainable agriculture, food security, and environmental science. Zamorano has a transformative impact on its talented, hardworking students, who come from over 20 Latin American countries and around the world. Zamorano places a strong emphasis on providing need-based scholarship funding to enable students to come to the University from communities impacted by poverty and malnutrition, studying alongside full-pay students and building bridges across the University's diverse population. Its campus is a botanical garden and biological reserve in Honduras, and the impact of this enriching, multicultural, and Pan-American environment spans far beyond the grounds. The University is a strategic partner to communities, governments, and the private sector for the advancement of agricultural programs and enterprises that benefit all of Latin America, as approximately 95% of Zamorano alumni (Zamoranos) return to their home countries to apply the skills and expertise they develop at the University.

Alumni of Zamorano University frequently go on to universities in the United States to pursue advanced degrees, and many are employed by major corporations in the US. There is a significant opportunity to enhance philanthropic support for Zamorano University in the United States, as the majority of Zamorano alumni who live outside Latin America are in the US. It is a critical moment of alignment to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the University and to advance its bold vision.

Establishing the Zamorano University Foundation, a United States-based 501(c)(3), is a cornerstone of this work. The University has an endowment of approximately \$120 million and is transferring its assets to the Foundation, with the support of a contract Chief Investment Officer. The inaugural Executive Director of the Foundation will report to the Foundation Board and will be a leading colleague working in concert with a newly appointed Director of Institutional Development for the Zamorano campus and the entire development team in Central America, the President of Zamorano University, and the boards of both the University and the Foundation.

This is an outstanding opportunity for a seasoned fundraising professional to expand the reach and scope of the University's philanthropic support by strengthening ties with existing donors and engaging new donors who have an appreciation for Zamorano's mission. In addition to well-rounded frontline fundraising experience, the successful candidate will demonstrate skill and nuance at articulating compelling cases for support, as Zamorano has an exciting breadth of avenues to inspire prospective donors, including educational access, research, technology, environmental sustainability, food security, and the health impacts related to food and environment.

Zamorano University Foundation has retained the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to conduct the search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT ZAMORANO UNIVERSITY

Zamorano University, located in Honduras, was founded in 1941 by Samuel Zemurray, a banana magnate, with the goal of creating a high-quality agricultural education center for Central America. The university's name, Zamorano, comes from the family that originally owned the estate where the school is located, in the Yeguaré River Valley. Since its founding, it has been a lifeline for students from across Latin America who are passionate about making a difference. Many students come from vulnerable communities and are committed to returning with the skills to drive local positive change. Zamorano has 1,200 students on campus and has more than 10,000 graduates to date. Currently, Zamorano's alumni work in 35 countries spanning five continents, transforming communities by applying their expertise in food system resilience, economic development, and social impact. Fifteen percent of the alumni work in academia; 53% work in private industry, 23% of whom are in R&D. A remarkable 30% of Zamorano alumni own job-generating businesses.

With Latin America's demand for higher education projected to grow by 20% by 2030, Zamorano's ['Learning by Doing'](#) mission is more vital than ever. With plans to expand into Life Sciences, the University is positioning itself as a leader in this field, reaffirming its commitment to innovation.

The campus is a botanical garden spanning 4,500 hectares, located in the heart of the Americas in Honduras, just 30 kilometers from Tegucigalpa. It comprises laboratories, research centers, production and marketing units, as well as an agro-industrial park for hands-on learning in real environments. The

University protects the Uyuca Biological Reserve, which covers a total area of 907 hectares full of biodiversity in fauna and flora. It also has a solar park that supplies 37% of Zamorano's energy demand.

Explore more about Zamorano University and the transformative impact it has on students' lives through this [profile video](#) of the University on the documentary series *Visionaries*.

Academic Programs

Zamorano's undergraduate education is centered on four fields: [Agricultural Sciences](#), [Food Science and Technology](#), [Agribusiness Management](#), and [Environmental Science and Development](#). Through its transformative Learning by Doing approach, Zamorano empowers students to tackle urgent challenges such as poverty, immigration, and environmental sustainability. In line with this philosophy, all undergraduate students complete at least one 15-week internship program, which opens doors for their future graduate studies or employment. Zamorano also provides each student with an intensive [English as a Foreign Language program](#), strengthening communication skills in professional and academic settings.

The University has a 94% undergraduate graduation rate, and 98% of alumni were employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation.

Graduate degree programs include master's degree programs in [Agribusiness](#) (including an [Executive Format](#)), [Coffee Growing and Business](#), and [Nutrition and Community Development](#). Zamorano also offers continuing education and training through its [Zamorano Everlasting Education](#) program.

Financial Aid + Funding

Students come from all socioeconomic backgrounds and from 35 countries, exemplifying Zamorano's core value of Panamericanism. Zamorano's "all-in" tuition for the 2025 academic year is US\$23,369, and 70% of undergraduate students receive scholarships or grants to attend the university. The university only awards scholarships based on financial need; it does not offer merit-based scholarships, though its process does reward academic excellence.

Many scholarships are funded by Latin American government entities; however, support from many governments has decreased significantly in recent years. Some of Zamorano's strategic partners who have provided scholarship, research, and community project funding include:

Public Sector:



Private Sector:



Academia/Research:



International Orgs:



Civil Society:



ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reporting to and working in close collaboration with the Foundation Board, the Executive Director of the Zamorano University Foundation will design and execute a comprehensive fundraising strategy in the United States supporting Zamorano University's mission, values, and strategic priorities. The Executive Director will play a vital role in the launch of the Foundation and maintain a collaborative working relationship with the President of Zamorano University, the Zamorano University Board of Trustees, and the Director of Institutional Development on the Zamorano campus. The Executive Director can be based anywhere in the US near a major airport, as the position will require substantial travel.

This work is informed by a recent in-depth fundraising feasibility study from CCS, providing insightful analysis into the donor prospect pool, potential campaign areas of emphasis, and a phased set of recommendations beginning immediately with a period of capacity building to maximize this moment of alignment. As the CCS Feasibility Study articulated: "For over 82 years, Zamorano has transformed the lives of students globally. Zamorano must expand its infrastructure, scholarships, and academic programs to remain a leader in agricultural skills and life sciences education. Now is the time to invest in future changemakers."

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director of the Zamorano University Foundation will be energized and inspired by the following opportunities and challenges:

Develop an effective fundraising strategy in alignment with the University's strategic planning.

Aligned with the University's overarching fundraising priorities, the Executive Director will develop and lead a comprehensive fundraising plan that includes expendable and endowment gifts from individual donors, private foundations, and corporations in the United States. In doing so, they will improve the visibility of Zamorano University, develop compelling cases for support that highlight the breadth of Zamorano's impact, and build a foundation of success for the Foundation in the United States. They will assess Zamorano's fundraising potential and craft a sophisticated multi-year fundraising and engagement strategy that will result in sustainable long-term growth, with a focus on major gifts from individuals, corporations, and foundations. They will develop these initiatives in alignment with the University's 2030 Strategic Plan. In order to achieve these goals, the Executive Director must develop a compelling case for support and increase the visibility and recognition of Zamorano University to build out a strong pipeline of prospects in the US.

The Executive Director will work closely with Zamorano University's Institutional Development team to articulate the case for support, aligned with the University's strategic planning. With an emphasis on collaboration, both teams will use tools such as the database to ensure alignment and clear communication with donors in an increasingly interconnected world.

Identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward annual and major gifts.

The inaugural Executive Director will build a systematic effort to identify individual, corporate, and foundation prospects in the US, expanding ZUF's prospect pipeline. This will include both alumni and non-affiliated individuals who may be inspired by the University's mission, programs, and impact. As the primary fundraiser for Zamorano University in the United States, they will personally identify, cultivate, solicit, and steward high-level gifts.

Provide leadership and management for Zamorano University Foundation staff and operations.

In the first 12 months of this work, the Foundation will have the capacity for the Executive Director to hire a development associate, with additional outsource support for operational functions, gift processing, and grant writing. As the Foundation grows, the Executive Director and the Foundation Board will evaluate the potential return on investment of additional team growth. Serving as the chief executive officer of the Foundation, the Executive Director will manage the day-to-day business and operations of the ZUF, supervising other Foundation staff and contractors as hired. This will include ensuring appropriate data management, documenting and sharing key metrics, including donor visits and contacts, stewardship outreaches, proposals submitted, and gifts closed.

Collaborate with and engage foundation board members, the President, the Institutional Development team, and senior staff to support Zamorano University's development efforts.

The Executive Director will collaborate closely with the University President, the University's senior leadership team, the Zamorano University and Zamorano University Foundation boards, and the ZUF Chief

Investment Officer to plan and execute all phases of a comprehensive fundraising strategy to cultivate and solicit major gifts that will result in sustainable long-term growth. As the board members are passionate and eager to engage in development efforts, the Executive Director will provide a high level of support to board members in ways that will inspire their fundraising commitment to Zamorano. In coordination with the Chief Investment Officer, they will also support the Foundation Board in managing the endowment, providing regular communications and updates.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Candidates will possess many, if not most, of the following professional qualifications and leadership characteristics:

- A commitment to the mission, vision, and values of Zamorano University.
- An entrepreneurial, innovative, and self-directed spirit who is culturally astute and charged with laying the foundation for the long-term success of the Zamorano University Foundation.
- A high-energy and proven fundraiser with a growth mindset, who will stimulate a robust culture of philanthropy in the United States.
- A strong record of achievement as a major gift fundraiser, including the identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of major donors (individuals, foundations, and corporations).
- A keen focus on operational efficiency, resource utilization, and strong financial acumen, with a collaborative leadership style.
- An effective communicator with equally strong listening skills and excellent presentation capabilities to serve as a passionate advocate for Zamorano University.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with boards, volunteers, and people of diverse backgrounds to cultivate a spirit of cooperation and the necessary flexibility to manage change.
- Honed analytical and strategic skills, with experience using data to support decision-making, craft persuasive storytelling and case statements, and create ambitious and achievable goals.
- Bachelor's degree is required; graduate degree is preferred.
- Proficiency in Spanish is highly desired.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

Compensation for this position will be competitive and negotiated in good faith, with the range beginning at \$180,000.

This is a remote, US-based position. The Executive Director can be located anywhere in the United States near a major airport.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Confidential inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (including resumes and two- to three-page letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/zamorano-university-foundation/executive-director>.

Phillip Petree, Partner
Kennedy Kearney-Fischer, Managing Associate
Isaacson, Miller

The Zamorano University Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer.