

Leadership Profile



VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTITUENT ENGAGEMENT

This leadership profile is intended to provide information and assist qualified individuals in assessing their interest in Chapman University and the position of Vice President of Development and Constituent Engagement.



Vice President of Development and Constituent Engagement

UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT, CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

Chapman University, a mid-sized, student-centered private research university with campuses in Orange and Irvine, California, seeks a dynamic, strategic, and forward-thinking advancement leader to serve as its next Vice President of Development and Constituent Engagement (VP).

Reporting to the Executive Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer (EVP/CAO) and serving as a member of the President's Senior Staff, the VP will join Chapman at a defining and highly energizing moment in the institution's trajectory. Fueled by extraordinary institutional momentum, significant philanthropic growth, and rising national prominence, Chapman is nearing the successful completion of an ambitious comprehensive campaign while simultaneously positioning the university for its next era of advancement success and impact. With oversight for a significant portfolio of Chapman's advancement operation, the VP will expertly lead development and constituent engagement efforts, guiding a high-performing advancement enterprise to even greater levels of sustained success.

Chapman University has always been a place where potential translates to possibility, which ties to its mission to provide personalized education of distinction that leads to inquiring, ethical, and productive lives as global citizens. As an institution that began with inclusivity, a passion for teaching and learning, and forward-looking optimism at its core, Chapman continues to champion these goals today.





Over the past several decades, Chapman has experienced unprecedented growth and academic achievement, guided by a series of ambitious five-year strategic plans and the support of the Chapman community. A cornerstone of the current strategic plan is [*Inspire: The Campaign for Chapman University*](#) (*Inspire*), a \$500 million comprehensive fundraising effort. With more than \$485 million raised ahead of schedule, the campaign is already reshaping campus life and expanding opportunities for students across all disciplines.

Building upon this success, the VP will help shape and execute a bold vision for the future of development and constituent engagement at Chapman. In doing so, the VP will serve as a senior leader across the university, partnering closely with EVP/CAO Jessica Berger and President Matthew Parlow, as well as building trusting relationships with deans, faculty, administrators, trustees, and key volunteers. This individual will lead a comprehensive development and engagement program spanning major and principal gifts, annual giving, alumni affairs, parent engagement, corporate and foundation relations, legacy planning, prospect development, and college -and school-based fundraising efforts, ensuring a cohesive and highly collaborative advancement strategy aligned with the university's strategic priorities and aspirations.

The VP will bring an entrepreneurial and data-informed approach to advancement leadership, leveraging sophisticated fundraising strategies, analytics, and relationship management practices to deepen donor engagement and expand Chapman's philanthropic pipeline at all levels. This individual will play a critical role in ensuring the successful completion of *Inspire* while helping position Chapman for sustained philanthropic growth well beyond the current campaign. Looking ahead, the VP will have a meaningful opportunity to diversify and

expand Chapman's donor base, deepen alumni participation and engagement, and strengthen pathways that connect constituent engagement efforts to philanthropic outcomes. This leader will assess opportunities to strengthen infrastructure, enhance operational effectiveness, and further integrate constituent engagement strategies that foster lifelong relationships with alumni, parents, and friends of the university. In addition, the VP will have the opportunity to shape the future composition of the team by hiring for several intentional vacancies and onboarding key talent to further strengthen organizational capacity and advance Chapman's ambitious goals. Leading by example, the VP will also personally manage a portfolio of high-capacity donors and will serve as a visible ambassador for Chapman across Southern California and beyond.

An accomplished and inspiring leader, the VP will oversee and mentor a high-performing team of nearly 25 professionals – roughly half of the University Advancement (UA) division – and will cultivate a culture grounded in collaboration, accountability, innovation, and excellence. Importantly, Chapman seeks a leader who will embrace the university's deeply relational culture and is eager to engage in the life of the institution as a visible member of the Chapman community. The successful candidate will possess the sophistication and emotional intelligence to navigate a complex and ambitious university environment, possessing demonstrated success partnering with academic and administrative leaders to advance institutional priorities through philanthropy. Chapman seeks a leader who is energized by growth, motivated by impact, and eager to help shape the future of a university distinguished by its entrepreneurial spirit, student-centered ethos, and commitment to academic excellence and innovation.





About Chapman

Founded in 1861, Chapman combines the resources of a growing research institution with the scale of a mid-sized, student-centered university. Chapman University enrolls approximately 9,700 students, including about 7,700 undergraduates and 2,000 graduate students. The university's picturesque Orange campus is located steps from restaurants, coffee shops, and boutiques; just 15 miles from the beach; and 30 miles from Los Angeles' business and cultural hubs. The Rinker Health Science campus in nearby Irvine is home to the university's health science graduate programs and is strategically located in a hub of pharmaceutical and medical device industry.

Supported by an endowment that just exceeded \$1 billion – one of the fastest-growing in the country and two-thirds of which supports student scholarships – Chapman continues to fulfill its mission of providing personalized education of distinction that prepares students for inquiring, ethical, and productive lives as global citizens.

The university offers a broad portfolio of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree programs across the arts, business, education, health sciences, and humanities. Chapman is categorized by the Carnegie Classification as an R2 "high research activity" institution. With a focus on experiential learning, Chapman prioritizes hands-on experience for students, who learn directly from distinguished, world-renowned faculty, including Nobel Prize winners, National Medal of Science awardees, and Academy Award winners. The university has produced a Rhodes Scholar and been named a top producer of Fulbright Scholars. It hosts a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious honor society. The university also has the support of its global alumni network of nearly 60,000. The university's momentum is reflected in its rise in the national rankings, recently achieving its best-ever ranking in *U.S. News & World Report*, rising nearly 10% year over year.





About Chapman

Chapman's students enjoy learning in a close-knit, student-focused community, where faculty and staff members know students by name, and the community is often referred to as the Chapman Family. Chapman's academic and co-curricular experiences are intentionally connected and support this vibrant community of scholarship, leadership, and student involvement.

Residential life plays a central role in the undergraduate experience, as living on campus is required for three years. Students on both campuses also benefit from Chapman's many small, discussion-based classes, which foster a collaborative academic environment and enduring faculty connections. A 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio supports close faculty engagement and personalized learning within this extraordinarily welcoming community. Students are supported by state-of-the-art facilities, including the Keck Center for Science and Engineering and the Rinker Health Science Campus, which features advanced labs and research spaces. Chapman students participate in more than 200 student organizations and 23 NCAA Division III athletic teams.

Learn more about Chapman's recent [State of the University Address](#) and visit chapman.edu to explore the university, its history, and culture.

Leadership



Matt Parlow has served as Chapman University's 14th president since September 2, 2025, and holds the Donald Bren Presidential Chair in Law. Over his 12 years at Chapman, Parlow has played a pivotal role in propelling the institution toward national prominence as both an administrator and a scholar. As Executive Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer (EVP/CAO), and Parker S. Kennedy Chair in Law, he drove transformational growth while leading the historic fundraising initiative *Inspire: The Campaign for*

Chapman University. This campaign seeks to raise \$500 million by 2028 and grow the university's endowment to \$2 billion by 2037. Under his leadership, Chapman surpassed \$400 million – well ahead of schedule – providing resources that strengthen academic excellence, support student success, and deepen community engagement.

An innovative leader with a strong sense of community, Parlow brings an ambitious vision for Chapman's future. Under his direction, the university is poised to reach new academic heights by fostering expansive interdisciplinary collaborations that push the boundaries of knowledge and innovation, while preparing students for success in a rapidly evolving workforce.

Deeply committed to the student experience, he will promote robust engagement between students, faculty, and the broader community, ensuring Chapman continues to provide the distinctive, hands-on learning opportunities that set the university apart. As the need for

civil discourse grows nationwide, Parlow is also dedicated to making Chapman a place where challenging conversations are embraced and free expression is protected. This commitment to free speech, academic excellence, and community is emblematic of Parlow's strong belief in the power of education as a force for good.

Before serving as EVP/CAO, Parlow was the Dean and Donald P. Kennedy Chair in Law at the Dale E. Fowler School of Law. As the school's second-longest-serving dean, he achieved financial stability, welcomed some of the strongest incoming classes in its history, and oversaw three consecutive years of record graduate employment. His leadership elevated the school's *U.S. News & World Report* ranking by more than 20 spots, while his fundraising established new professorships and expanded key curricular areas that foster innovation and student achievement.

Parlow's career in higher education also includes serving as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Professor of Law at Marquette University Law School, where he taught Property, Land Use, and Professional Sports Law (with Major League Baseball Commissioner Emeritus Bud Selig). He also taught in Chapman's Fowler School of Law from 2005 to 2008 and has twice been recognized as Professor of the Year, at Chapman and at Marquette.

Prior to his academic career, Parlow was an associate with the Los Angeles firm of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP and served as a law clerk for the Honorable Pamela Ann Rymer of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Parlow holds a J.D. from Yale Law School and a B.A. magna cum laude in History from Loyola Marymount University.



Leadership



Jessica Berger serves as the Executive Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer at Chapman University, where she oversees all fundraising and development, alumni relations, and the university's \$500 million *Inspire* comprehensive campaign, among other duties. She joined Chapman in July 2025.

Berger joined Chapman from California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM), where she was Vice President of University Advancement and Executive Director of the Foundation. In her role, she led a talented team of professionals in the advancement

division collectively focused on building a culture of philanthropy and developing meaningful relationships campus-wide and across the nation. She partnered closely with university leadership, board directors, donors, and community members to achieve record-breaking philanthropic results, including securing the university's first eight-figure gifts totaling \$20 million and preparing the launch of CSUSM's largest-ever comprehensive campaign totaling \$200 million. She also served as Chair of the Vice Presidents for University Advancement Council for the California State University system.

Berger came to CSUSM from Harvey Mudd College (HMC) where she served as Assistant Vice President for Development and oversaw all development-related activity in the Office of College Advancement. She launched new initiatives to strengthen donor stewardship, worked to enhance HMC's visibility and fundraising efforts, and collaborated across the college and the community to implement successful giving campaigns, contributing to the success of HMC's \$175 million comprehensive campaign.

Prior to HMC, Berger oversaw the annual giving program at Polytechnic School and managed alumni, parent, and trustee volunteer fundraising activity, and donor-related events during a \$93 million comprehensive campaign. Berger's earlier experience includes fundraising for a nonprofit orphanage foundation in Kenya, and social work-related activity for the U.S. House of Representatives and a residential treatment center.

Berger, who is a first-generation college graduate and a native of Ohio, received a B.A. in Psychology from Wittenberg University and an M.S.W. from Cleveland State University.





Financial and Fundraising Overview

Chapman University's academic excellence and momentum as an institution are supported by its healthy financial position, resulting from careful planning and the thoughtful stewardship of university assets. Further, as of February 2026, the university's endowment crossed the \$1 billion mark for the first time in its history and has been amongst one of the fastest-growing university endowments in the country. Just a decade ago, Chapman's endowment stood at \$300 million.

Chapman's University Advancement (UA) division is comprised of roughly 60 dedicated professionals,

all of whom have contributed to an exponential upward trajectory of annual fundraising productivity. Chapman successfully reached a record-breaking fundraising year in FY26. This rise in fundraising performance has contributed significantly to the success of [*Inspire: The Campaign for Chapman University \(Inspire\)*](#), which seeks to raise \$500 million by 2028 and increase the university's endowment to \$2 billion by 2037. To date, the [*campaign*](#) has secured support from more than 21,600 donors and in the form of more than 92,600 gifts.



Role of the Vice President Development and Constituent Engagement

The Vice President of Development and Constituent Engagement (VP) will be a key leader within Chapman University, serving on the University's senior staff and a member of the University Advancement (UA) senior leadership team.

Reporting directly to the Executive Vice President and Chief Advancement Officer (EVP/CAO), the VP leads all fundraising, alumni affairs, and parent relations activities pursuant to Chapman's Strategic Plan and in support of Chapman's current \$500 million comprehensive campaign and beyond. A forward-thinking, entrepreneurial leader, the VP will be responsible for building and leading a team of approximately 25 talented development professionals and will implement best practices to optimize fundraising and engagement success. The VP will have experience developing and implementing a goal-oriented, data-driven, and donor-centric approach to enhance and elevate UA's existing development programs.

This role oversees the areas of Legacy Planning, Corporate Giving, Foundation Relations, Prospect Research and Management, College and

School Development, Major Giving, Annual Giving, Alumni Affairs, and Parent Relations. The VP also partners with Strategic Marketing and Communications, Special Events, and Donor Relations to build a robust and comprehensive advancement plan to elevate Chapman's development efforts. An outstanding leader and fundraiser with experience partnering with executive and academic leadership to create sophisticated gift strategies and close principal gifts, the VP will build lasting relationships with their portfolio of donors and prospects, leading to strong fundraising success. The VP will set annual goals in consultation with the EVP and will collaborate extensively with university leadership – including the Board of Trustees, Board of Governors, and Alumni Association Board – to optimize development, engagement, and stewardship opportunities.



Key Responsibilities

LEADERSHIP AND COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN

- Assess current development strategies and fundraising potential and develop a strategic plan to enhance fundraising activity and build the philanthropic pipeline, providing leadership to the Associate Vice President of Development to execute on such strategies.
- Serve as Campaign Director and, in collaboration with the EVP/CAO, thoughtfully lead the \$500 million comprehensive campaign to a successful completion.
- Implement solicitation strategies of the strategic plan that will result in sustainable long-term growth in philanthropic contributions, including expanding unrestricted, restricted, major gifts, capital, and endowment support.
- Develop and deploy a strategic, modern, and forward-thinking operating model that utilizes and is enabled by metrics, data analytics, and predictive modeling to build portfolios and inform fundraising strategies.
- Establish development goals and benchmarks, track progress, and adjust strategies and tactics, as necessary, to meet goals.
- Develop strategies and incentives to facilitate close collaboration among fundraisers and other colleagues to optimize fundraising and engagement opportunities.
- Provide leadership to the Assistant Vice President of Constituent Engagement, ensuring integration of alumni and parent engagement strategies into overall advancement goals.
- Develop and implement new and innovative plans to identify and acquire prospective individual and institutional donors, increase donor retention, and upgrade and renew existing donors.
- Partner with the EVP/CAO, President, and board leadership in the identification, recruitment, and cultivation of new board members, identifying potential key leaders, as well as other new funding sources.
- Work closely with Strategic Marketing and Communications, Special Events, and Donor Relations to develop a robust and comprehensive advancement plan for Chapman's development efforts.
- Represent the university at events with board members and other key donors and constituencies.
- Design initiatives and collaborate with the Assistant Vice President of Constituent Engagement to design and execute strategies to deepen alumni and parent connection to Chapman, to increase alumni and parent participation rates.
- Ensure the cultivation of prospective donors at all levels, including annual, mid-level, planned, major, principal, and transformational giving.
- Ensure that development activities across the university are well coordinated and support both institutional and unit-specific priorities.
- Orchestrate the participation of the President, EVP/CAO, Provost, deans, faculty members, trustees, and volunteers in the joint cultivation and stewardship of key funding sources.
- Develop clear and compelling messaging that leverages the strengths and aspirations of Chapman and generate excitement about the university's trajectory, resulting in philanthropic support for funding priorities.
- Oversee the preparation of written proposals and targeted marketing for comprehensive campaigns, donor cultivation, and stewardship.





Key Responsibilities

PERSONAL PORTFOLIO

- Serve as a frontline qualification, cultivation, and solicitation officer to create opportunities for connecting constituents with Chapman's strategic funding priorities.
- Personally cultivate, solicit, and steward a select portfolio of up to 50 major and principal gift prospects, including many of the university's highest potential donors.
- Lead the frontline fundraising team by example, personally securing major and principal gifts and meeting individual fundraising goals.

MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

- Lead, support, and mentor a staff of approximately 25 professionals, promoting a culture of excellence, collaboration, and professional growth.
- Oversee personnel activities, including hiring, training, coaching, and performance assessment and feedback.

- Set clear direction, priorities, and well-defined, measurable goals for staff.
- Ensure that staff members execute effective prospect and donor management strategies that result in meaningful engagement and successful solicitation of gifts.
- Foster a work environment that recognizes and rewards performance, supports innovation, builds confidence, encourages collaboration and teamwork, reduces silos, and retains staff.
- Actively and meaningfully promote a commitment to excellence, integrity, respect, and accountability.
- Enhance professional development opportunities for staff.
- Ensure staff are knowledgeable of and in compliance with all regulations and laws, policies, procedures, and ethical standards.
- Oversee and administer budget and manage expenses for the development team.



Qualifications & Characteristics

A bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and experience, and at least 10 years of progressively responsible fundraising experience, including leadership in a university advancement organization, is required for this position. Knowledge of Orange County and the greater Southern California philanthropic and business communities is a plus.

Chapman University seeks a Vice President of Development and Constituent Engagement who brings many, if not most, of the following qualifications and characteristics.

- A depth of knowledge in all key areas of development, including designing, implementing, and closing a comprehensive campaign.
- Demonstrated ability and experience building upon an existing development program, resulting in a meaningful increase in philanthropic revenue for an organization.
- Experience managing a portfolio and personally securing major and principal gifts, as part of a comprehensive campaign.
- Significant experience with board development and working with board members and volunteers in the cultivation of prospects.
- Experience working effectively with deans, directors, academic, and university leaders to achieve annual fundraising goals.
- A history of increasing the effectiveness of a development program and its staff through established objectives and performance standards.
- Proven management skills in establishing a team and goal-oriented environment that empowers staff and fosters professional development 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.
- Experience successfully training and motivating frontline fundraising teams to meet annual fundraising goals.
- A strong commitment and sensitivity to fostering inclusive working and learning environments.
- Experience using data analytics and predictive modeling to build individual portfolios and inform fundraising practices.
- Strong skills in financial analysis to provide reports and analysis to leadership and the Board of Trustees.
- An ability to represent the university in a positive light, communicate persuasively and passionately to, and collaborate effectively with various internal and external constituencies.
- Strong interpersonal skills to develop and maintain relationships, exercise diplomacy, and build partnerships.
- An ability to build relationships with a wide range of constituents from diverse backgrounds.
- Technical skills to learn and use Chapman's CRM database and other systems.
- An ability to create operational efficiencies and the best use of resources, including a demonstrated understanding of budgets and the ability to manage them.
- An ability to understand and consistently ensure compliance with university policies and procedures, state and federal rules and regulations, as well as high ethical standards.
- An ability to travel locally to meet with prospects and donors in Southern California and to travel more extensively on occasion, as required.
- An understanding of academic and research functions as well as the operating principles of a private university.





Nominations & Applications

Chapman University has retained Isaacson, Miller, the national executive search firm, to conduct this important recruitment. Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. The salary range for this position is \$325,000 to \$350,000, with campus housing available and bonus eligibility. Chapman University offers a comprehensive package of benefits.

Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: [Vice President of Development and Constituent Engagement, Chapman University](#)

ISAACSON, MILLER

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Chapman University is an equal opportunity employer that provides equal employment opportunities to all individuals, regardless of their protected characteristics. All qualified applicants and employees are encouraged to apply and will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, military and veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Chapman University. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Chapman would supersede any conflicting information in this document.

