

University of Illinois Foundation

Senior Vice President, Central Development Programs

CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS

The Search

The University of Illinois Foundation (UIF) seeks a strategic, collaborative, and highly versatile development leader to

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
FOUNDATION**



serve as the senior vice president (SVP) for central development programs and help shape and execute fundraising strategy across the University of Illinois System. The SVP will report to Foundation President James H. Moore, a nationally regarded thought leader in higher education advancement, and serve as a key member of UIF's senior leadership team, driving philanthropic growth, enhancing donor engagement, and strengthening fundraising effectiveness in support of institutional priorities. The SVP will partner closely with university and advancement leaders to develop and implement high-impact strategies, programs, and services that strengthen fundraising effectiveness; play a critical coordinating role in future campaigns; enhance the donor experience; and maximize philanthropic support across the University of Illinois System.

The University of Illinois Foundation is the official fundraising arm for the University of Illinois System. As an independent 501(c)(3) organization, it secures and stewards philanthropic support for all university system stakeholders. UIF operates from a position of considerable strength and momentum. In fiscal year 2026, the foundation achieved the most successful fundraising year in its history, securing \$748.3 million in new business and \$444.0 million in cash gifts. The foundation currently manages a \$3.14 billion endowment pool.

As UIF looks towards its ambitious future, the SVP will provide visionary leadership for a comprehensive advancement enterprise, integrating people, processes, technology, and strategy to create a high-performing fundraising ecosystem. Through operational excellence, innovation, donor-centered engagement, and enterprise-wide collaboration, this leader will drive philanthropic growth, strengthen constituent relationships, and advance the university's mission and long-term strategic aspirations.

Reporting directly to the President and CEO, the SVP will serve as a key member of the foundation's executive leadership team. This leader will partner closely with key stakeholders to strengthen alignment across a distributed fundraising enterprise, ensuring that advancement strategies, donor engagement efforts, and philanthropic priorities are integrated and positioned for long-term success. Simultaneously, the SVP will serve as an active major and principal gifts fundraiser, cultivating philanthropic partnerships and advancing the university's most significant priorities.

The SVP will oversee a 50-person team across several critical functions including gift planning and trust services, foundation relations, strategic innovation, major and principal gifts support, donor services, and board and donor engagement. As a strategic leader, the SVP will champion innovation, enhance operational effectiveness, leverage data-informed decision-making, and strengthen donor-centered programs that elevate fundraising performance across the system.

The University of Illinois Foundation has retained Jack Gorman of Isaacson, Miller, the national executive search firm, to assist with this important recruitment. All inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

University of Illinois Foundation

Established in 1935, the University of Illinois Foundation is the official fundraising and private gift-receiving entity for the [University of Illinois System](#) and its three universities: [University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign](#), [University of Illinois Chicago](#), and [University of Illinois Springfield](#). The Foundation, a 501(c)3 charitable organization, is an independent and separate nonprofit entity from the University of Illinois. Its mission is to encourage and administer private gifts and serve the UI System by working closely with alumni, faculty, corporations, foundations, and development staff to create fundraising programs and opportunities that benefit the University of Illinois.

The foundation offers leadership and coordination across the development program at the University of Illinois to identify strategic opportunities for continued growth and enhancement. Additionally, it provides leadership and guidance in areas that require specialized expertise, including campaign planning and deployment, donor engagement, marketing, and events management. The foundation's gift planning experts also share their extensive knowledge in matters of taxation, investments, estate planning, and financial management, specifically as it relates to benefits donors can take advantage of through their giving to the University of Illinois.

The foundation is the owner and custodian of the donor database and technology supporting the universities' advancement activities. The foundation's assets reached \$3.9 billion at the end of fiscal year 2026. The largest asset is the endowment pool at \$3.14 billion as of June 30, 2026. The foundation's investment office oversees and manages the endowment and leads efforts that focus on

performance and the long-term, strategic management of the endowment, as well as the foundation's investment policies. The funds generated from the endowment are distributed annually to each university to support world-class faculty, staff, and students today, tomorrow, and into the future.

Current Context

The University of Illinois Foundation achieved record-breaking new business totals for FY 2026, with \$748.3 million in new business, the largest single-year total in Foundation history, and \$444.0 million in cash received, the second highest total on record.

Of the \$748.3 million in new business recorded this fiscal year, \$156.4 million was designated to student support, \$109.8 million to research, and \$314.9 million to academic programs and faculty support. An additional \$326.7 million was directed to facilities, \$15.2 million to public service, and \$15.3 million was given to "other," which supports things such as lectureships. Another \$110.0 million was designated by donors as unrestricted, which provides departments and units with the flexibility for pressing and emerging needs.

Donors also contributed \$337.6 million of the \$444.0 million cash total to the University of Illinois as current use funds, which made an impact in critical areas such as student and faculty support, research, facilities, and academic programs. The remaining \$106.4 million came in the form of endowed funds, annuities, and life income funds that support the long-term stability of the University of Illinois.

The value of the University of Illinois Foundation's active endowment grew to \$3.14 billion in FY26 and is posting an annual preliminary return of 9.8%. Through the endowment pool, the Foundation distributed \$103.2 million to the University of Illinois System, including \$80.9 million to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, \$18.8 million to the University of Illinois Chicago, \$1.2 million to the University of Illinois Springfield, and \$2.3 million to the University of Illinois System offices.

Current Leadership

James Moore is the president and CEO of UIF and provides strategic oversight and leadership of the systemwide development program for the University of Illinois. He previously served as president and CEO of the University of Arizona Foundation and the University of Northern Colorado Foundation. He also held senior-level positions at Northwest Missouri State University, Clarkson University, University of Arizona, and Iowa State University.

A veteran advancement professional with more than three decades of experience, President Moore has also served the profession as a volunteer, speaker, and author. His service to the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) included membership on CASE's National Committee on Institutionally Related Foundations, the CASE Commission on Philanthropy, and the CASE Board of Trustees.

In addition to his service to CASE, President Moore has served on numerous thought-leadership councils, authored book chapters on institutionally-related foundations, and has been an invited speaker and facilitator at several Association of Governing Board (AGB) Leadership Forums. In 2023, he was appointed as a faculty member of the Big Ten Fund Raisers Institute.

The foundation is guided by a dedicated [Board of Directors](#) and an [Executive Operations](#) team that are committed to advancing the mission of the University of Illinois. Together, they provide governance, leadership, and operational expertise that enables the Foundation to serve donors, support the University of Illinois System, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the University of Illinois Chicago, and the University of Illinois Springfield.

The Board of Directors is the governing body of the foundation. The board is responsible for identifying and supporting the Foundation's mission and selecting its president. It consists of 19 to 24 voting members. Governing directors of the board are elected for three years, with a maximum of four terms. Governing directors whose terms have expired may be elected life directors who serve in an advisory capacity and have no voting privileges.

Role of the Senior Vice President for Central Development Programs

The senior vice president (SVP) will provide enterprise-wide leadership for the University of Illinois Foundation's central development programs, partnering with university, foundation, and advancement leaders to align strategy, services, and resources with institutional priorities and ambitious campaign goals. The role oversees an integrated portfolio spanning gift planning and trust services, donor relations and stewardship, foundation relations, strategic innovation, board engagement, and major and principal gifts support, while also serving as a senior fundraiser and trusted advisor on the university system's most consequential philanthropic relationships. By establishing consistent standards, performance measures, governance, and operating practices, the SVP will strengthen UIF's distributed fundraising model, advance innovation and donor-centered engagement, and build high-performing teams and organizational capacity to accelerate philanthropic growth across the system. The expected salary range for the Senior Vice President will be \$275,000 - \$325,000.

Key Opportunities and Challenges for the Senior Vice President

The success of the Senior Vice President for Central Development Programs will be determined by how well they address the following leadership opportunities and challenges:

Strategic Leadership, Executive Support, and Systemwide Alignment

- Provide strategic leadership and oversight for all central development programs and services as a strategic advisor to the president and key member of his senior leadership team, ensuring alignment with system fundraising priorities, campaign objectives, and institutional strategic plan(s).
- Partner with university vice chancellors in a distributed fundraising model to create programs and align services with the needs of the individual universities and associated units.
- Support and engage the foundation board of directors by providing guidance, resources, training, and relationship management that enable effective governance and philanthropic leadership.
- Lead, develop, and mentor high-performing teams by establishing clear goals, supporting professional development, driving accountability, and fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, customer service, and continuous improvement.
- Serve as a thought leader in advancement services and philanthropy, continuously monitoring emerging trends, technologies, and industry best practices to anticipate change, influence organizational strategy, and advance innovation across the fundraising enterprise.

Increase Philanthropic Growth and Donor Engagement

- Serve as a major/principal gifts fundraiser and ambassador for philanthropic engagement.
 - Direct donor engagement strategy and services, providing leadership for donor relations, stewardship, impact reporting, and engagement initiatives that strengthen donor retention and lifetime philanthropic support.
 - Maintain a portfolio of select board members, major donors, and principal gift prospects, serving as a strategic relationship manager and ambassador for the foundation and university.
 - Direct a team of major gift officers to support specific university and system fundraising priorities.
 - Oversee gift planning and trust services, including charitable estate planning, complex gifts, life-income agreements, trusts, bequests, and other planned giving vehicles; ensure effective collaboration between gift planning professionals and frontline fundraising teams.
-

Enhance Advancement Operations

- Coordinate and direct UIF Strategic Innovation programs including the Foundation Resource Center (FRC), which focuses on sourcing private funding from Foundation partners.
- Establish service standards, operating procedures, and governance structures that create efficiencies while meeting the unique needs of university partners.
- Utilize data analytics and insights to inform decision-making, track progress, and refine fundraising strategies.
- Ensure compliance with the foundation, University of Illinois System, and all relevant regulations, ethical standards, and reporting requirements related to fundraising. Uphold the highest ethical standards in donor interactions and communication principles.
- Develop and manage departmental budgets, staffing plans, and organizational structure to ensure effective stewardship of resources and achievement of institutional goals.

Qualifications and Characteristics

- Minimum of 15 years of progressively responsible leadership experience in advancement, development, fundraising operations, advancement services, philanthropy, higher education administration, or a related field.
- Demonstrated success leading within a multi-unit, decentralized, or matrixed organization.
- Proven ability to develop and implement enterprise-wide strategies that improve fundraising effectiveness, organizational performance, operational efficiency, and donor experience.
- Experience partnering with senior institutional leaders, fundraising executives, governing boards, and key stakeholders to achieve strategic objectives.
- Strong understanding of fundraising principles, philanthropic trends, campaign operations, donor lifecycle management, and advancement best practices.
- Demonstrated success leading organizational change, process improvement, and technology initiatives within a complex environment.

- Experience overseeing gift planning and trust services, including complex gifts, estates, trusts, and life-income arrangements preferred.
- Experience serving as a principal gifts fundraiser and managing relationships with major donors, institutional leaders, and governing board members preferred.
- Bachelor's degree required, advanced degree preferred.

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/university-illinois-foundation/senior-vice-president-central-development-programs>

All correspondences can be directed to the Isaacson, Miller representatives below:

Jack Gorman, Partner
Grace Zakim, Managing Associate
Kahn Lee, Managing Associate
Sandeep Kaur, Managing Search Coordinator

The University of Illinois System is an equal opportunity employer, including but not limited to disability and/or veteran status, and complies with all applicable state and federal employment mandates. Please visit Required Employment Notices and Posters to view our non-discrimination statement and find additional information about required background checks, sexual harassment/misconduct disclosures, and employment eligibility review through E-Verify.

Applicants with disabilities are encouraged to apply and may request a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (2008) to complete the application and/or interview process. Requests may be submitted through the reasonable accommodations portal, or by contacting the Accessibility & Accommodations Division of the Office for Access and Equity at 217-333-0885, or by emailing accessibility@illinois.edu.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by University of Illinois Foundation. 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 University of Illinois Foundation would supersede any conflicting information in this document.