
ALLISON SARAS, PHD

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SKILLS

Fundraising & Donor Relations: Capital campaigns, planned giving, annual funds, major and principal gifts.

Leadership & Strategy: Team management, board oversight, institutional planning.

Communication & Outreach: Marketing strategy, digital platforms, constituent engagement.

Data Analytics: Predictive modeling, donor segmentation, performance reporting.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Experienced in driving philanthropic growth and managing strategic fundraising initiatives for mission-driven organizations. Dynamic and forward-thinking leader with expertise in capital and annual fund campaigns, data-driven strategies for identifying potential donors, and implementing cutting-edge stewardship programs. Passionate about leveraging innovative approaches to cultivate strong donor relationships and maximize fundraising outcomes.

WORK HISTORY

Senior Major Gift Officer and Philanthropic Specialist, 05/2022 - Current

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY – Pittsburgh, PA

Senior Major Gift Officer & Philanthropic Specialist

- Maintain a major gift portfolio of 125+ prospects, successfully securing gifts between \$25K–\$500K annually.
- Collaborate with university leadership, including the President, to foster strategic donor engagement.
- Partner with the Center for Global Engagement to streamline international fundraising strategies, expanding the university's global footprint.

Chief Philanthropy Officer, 01/2017 - 05/2022

SHADY SIDE ACADEMY – Pittsburgh, PA

- Secured record-breaking \$15M and \$5.2M gifts, significantly advancing the school's financial stability.

- Directed an annual \$1.5M budget, leading a 7-member team to a 72% increase in fundraising results over five years.
- Conceptualized and executed a \$2.2M library initiative and \$2.1M athletics facility project, enhancing student resources.
- Developed a predictive modeling system to identify and engage new donors, increasing prospect acquisition by 20%.
- Facilitated strategic planning sessions with the Board of Trustees and Senior Administrators, integrating philanthropy into long-term institutional goals.
- Cultivated relationships with international alumni and donors, resulting in increased philanthropic contributions and strengthened cross-cultural connections.

Director of Capital Campaign and Major Gifts, 01/2016 - 01/2017

SHADY SIDE ACADEMY – Pittsburgh, PA

- Launched and completed the \$30M Campaign for Shady Side, achieving over \$14M for capital projects \$7M for the endowment fund, and \$9M for the annual fund.
- Implemented a multimedia marketing strategy, increasing visibility and donor interest.
- Enhanced the planned giving program, resulting in a 12% growth in pledged legacy contributions.

Charitable Relationship Manager, Swanson School of Engineering, 01/2014 - 01/2016

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH – Pittsburgh, PA

- Managed 150+ high-capacity donors, securing \$1.5M annually in major gifts.
- Partnered with school leadership and faculty to align donor interests with critical institutional needs.

Director of Constituent Relations, School of Law, 01/2010 - 01/2014

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH – Pittsburgh, PA

- Expanded the alumni relations program, resulting in a 23% increase in alumni participation and giving.
- Created a faculty giving program that achieved a 75% participation rate in its inaugural year.

Assistant Director of Development, Charles Widger School of Law, 01/2008 - 01/2010

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY – Villanova, PA

- Established the school's inaugural reunion giving program, contributing to a 15% increase in annual fund donations.
- Designed data-driven donor tracking systems that improved targeted outreach success rates.

Assistant Director of the Annual Fund, University Advancement, 01/2006 - 01/2008

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY – Villanova, PA

- Supervised all operations pertaining to the student telemarketing efforts: recruited, trained, and evaluated student callers
- Organized special events, fundraising initiatives, and recognition programs for young alumni
- Assisted in marketing and promoting the University's Corporate Matching Gift program

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy: Higher Education Management, 01/2016

University of Pittsburgh - Pittsburgh, PA

Master of Public Administration: Non-profit Management, 01/2010

Villanova University - Villanova, PA

Bachelor of Arts: Political Science and History, 01/2006

Pennsylvania State University - University Park, PA

AWARDS

Pittsburgh's 50 Finest 2015, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Pittsburgh's 40 under 40 2016, Pittsburgh Magazine & Pittsburgh Urban Magnet Project (PUMP)