

# Allison Searson

## PROFILE

Versatile, results-driven management professional with 15+ years experience and a master's degree in Strategic Communications from Columbia University. Broad strengths in program/project management, marketing, business development, fundraising, stewardship, board management, event coordination, alumni relations, grateful patient and healthcare philanthropy, and staff leadership.

## EXPERIENCE

### The University of Vermont Foundation

2014-present

#### Director of Annual Giving, Academic Health Sciences

The academic health sciences development team garners philanthropic support for The Robert Larner, MD College of Medicine at The University of Vermont, the UVM College of Nursing and Health Sciences, and the UVM Medical Center, which includes the UVM Children's Hospital and the UVM Cancer Center.

- As Director of Annual Giving, I oversee all direct marketing programs for academic health sciences, including a robust grateful patient program that utilizes direct mail, email, and telemarketing.
- I manage the events team, which executes fundraising events to benefit the UVM Medical Center and Children's Miracle Network Hospitals events to benefit our children's hospital.
- I currently oversee a team of three and share an administrative assistant.
- Approximately 25% of my time is spent on the road visiting with Larner College of Medicine alumni and generous annual giving community members to cultivate, solicit, and steward them.

#### Key Accomplishments:

- Streamlined the grateful patient program through new vendor partnership and through the implementation of a new grateful patient database.
- Integrated the process and deduping of data across two databases (as the University and Medical Center are two separate organizations).
- Launched the Philanthropic Advisory Group comprised of medical center employees to help give input and direction to our new employee giving campaign and to serve as philanthropy ambassadors.
- Implemented three new programs at the UVM Medical Center that help tell the story of the annual fund: the Honor a Caregiver program, Healthcare Hero program, and a grant process for distributing annual fund dollars.
- Launched a direct marketing program for the UVM Children's Hospital, building their base of support, in preparation for a children's health campaign.
- Increased Larner College of Medicine alumni participation by 4% in my first year.
  - Partnering with the alumni relations team we have created an integrated program with cohesive messaging, and have maintained over 30% alumni participation.
- Oversaw the launch of a young alumni engagement plan and the revamping of our class agent program.
- Successfully executed the Larner College of Medicine's first Match Challenge, which has grown year over year for each of the three years it has been executed.

### Columbia University

2001-2014

#### Deputy Director, Annual Fund Programs (2008 – 2014)

Expanding upon my duties as Associate Director, I also helped to ensure projects were on time and on budget, I managed the relationships of many internal and external vendors, and I helped to oversee the Student Calling Center, which was managed by RuffaloCody (now Ruffalo Noel Levitz).

**Key Accomplishments:**

- Successfully implemented recurring giving through direct mail.
- Rolled out new online project management tool that was used in partnership with school clients.
- Collaborated with our Information Services team to create a suite of reports to analyze results.
- Assisted in the successful planning and execution of our first 24-hour online fundraising day - Columbia Giving Day, which raised \$6.8M from 5,177 donors.

**Associate Director, Annual Fund Programs (2006 – 2008)**

Supplied leadership and oversight of revenue-generating unit managing direct marketing programs for eight schools and programs, each with its own budget.

- Provided consultation to schools on annual giving and effective utilization of the Columbia Student Calling Center, including support, reporting, and strategic planning/analysis.
- Managed five staff as they provided unparalleled customer support and executed direct marketing, stewardship, and student calling campaigns.
- Planned and coordinated special events, developed new business, oversaw billing, and managed/negotiated vendor contracts.
- Controlled individual budgets exceeding \$1MM for individual schools clients.

**Key Accomplishments:**

- Strategically segmented all populations to ensure targeted mailings, emails, and student calling, achieving growth in all funds and facilitating the negotiation of higher budgets for many of programs.
  - Negotiated vendor costs that saved schools 10-15% on direct mail programs.
- Played key role in acquiring new school clients for the Student Calling Center.
  - The acquisition of new clients generated an estimated 30% profit in 2010.
- Planned and organized special events to engage new donors and steward current donors.
- Designed, wrote, and produced stewardship programs and all materials for many of the school clients.
- Hired, trained, mentored, and retained a focused, motivated staff through weekly team meetings, informal meetings, and annual career discussions.

**Development Officer, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences (2004 – 2005)**

Managed direct marketing, telefundraising, personal solicitations, stewardship events/ mailings, and Alumni Board for Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. Administered \$240K budget.

**Key Accomplishments:**

- Within one year, grew GSAS annual fund 35% (from \$680K to \$840K).
- Developed new branding for all direct marketing mailings, a brand that was adopted across the school.
- Established role of Annual Fund Chair and recruited Board Member that held the position for two terms.

**Development Assistant (2002 – 2004)**

**Financial Assistant (2001-2002)**

**TECHNOLOGY SUMMARY**

BSR Advance, Raiser's Edge, Constant Contact, MS Office Suite, QuickBooks, Dreamweaver

**EDUCATION**

**Columbia University**, New York, NY M.S., Strategic Communications

**Binghamton University**, Binghamton, NY B.A., English Literature

**VOLUNTEER WORK**

**PTO Volunteer**, Shelburne Community School (September 2011- present)

**Treasurer and Member of the Board of Directors**, City Market Coop (January 2015 - present)