

SANDI R. BLISS

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OBJECTIVE

Guide and strategically lead efforts to significantly increase philanthropic support for a progressive organization.

PROFILE

- In-depth understanding of fundraising and donation management.
- Talented development leader and team builder with experience representing both donors and institutions in transformational philanthropy.
- Track record of building relationships with mutual trust and respect with volunteers, staff, and within highly technical donor bases during billion-dollar campaigns.
- Proven ability to develop successful donor strategies across academic disciplines. Sought out among other development teams for innate ability to develop successful donor strategies.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills that empower teams to perform at their highest level.
- Outstanding written and verbal communications skills: articulate, deliberate, persuasive.

EXPERIENCE

June 19, 2023-Current University of Texas Permian Basin Odessa, TX

Vice President Institutional Advancement

- Lead & manage all aspects of University Advancement, Alumni Relations, Gift Administration, Prospect Research &

Management, Corporate & Foundation Relations, Stewardship, Events, Annual Giving & Communications.

- Growing donor pipeline from \$2M to \$30M+
- Built a cohesive Advancement Team by growing the team from one to nine.
- Increased average ask for prospects from \$25K to \$100K+
- Built a comprehensive Planned Giving Program where there previously was not one, including donor advised funds and trusts.
- Implemented four new fundraising software programs to allow for stronger gift management, tracking participation, corporate match program and to increase giving.
- Developed Annual Giving Program to include targeted mailers both digital and hard copies which increased end of the year giving by 64%.
- Ongoing management and training for Advancement staff members.
- Established University Campaign Priorities, to include comprehensive naming documents for the Odessa Campus and Midland Campus, consistent- purposeful stewardship.
- Revamped Alumni engagement strategies, membership programs, and Alumni participation programs that directly impact Annual Giving.

January 3, 2017-May 31, 2023 Virginia Tech Blacksburg, VA

Chief Advancement Officer Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets

- Lead & manage all aspects of Corps Advancement, Alumni Relations, Scholarships, Stewardship, Annual Giving & Communications.
- Grew Corps pipeline from \$5M to \$50M+
- Developed a cohesive partnership with Principal Gifts.
- Reached Campaign Goal 5 years ahead of schedule with 52% of donations coming from non-alums.
- Increased average ask for Corps prospects from \$50K to \$100K+
- Major Gifts and Annual Giving increased in Corps by \$8M+ with FY22 closing at \$15M and yielded a record 31% participation rate.

- Built a cohesive Corps Advancement Team by combining two teams who had previously not worked together.
- Ongoing management and training for 8 Advancement staff members.
- Revamped the Corps scholarship management and stewardship program.
- Established Corps Campaign Priorities, to include consistent-purposeful stewardship, and best practices.
- Developed and implemented Annual Giving and Alumni engagement strategies, particularly with young alumni.

2014-2016 University of Miami

Coral Gables, FL

Senior Director of Development Central Initiatives & Scholarships

- Led Central Fundraising Priorities for the Provost and two Vice Provosts.
- Developed pipeline and fundraising plan for UM's new \$500M 10-year Student Housing project.
- Led and assisted in efforts to increase Central Fundraising to close and steward two key gifts: \$20M gift to name the Student Center and \$100M gift to Central Initiatives and STEM under the Provost.
- Developed a fundraising budget and goals for Central Major Gifts and Annual Giving.
- Increased Central Initiatives Advancement Team under the Provost from 1 to 3 members.
- Created strategic messaging for endowed scholarships currently used by all UM Advancement.
- Assisted in writing UM's new scholarship policies and best practices for management of scholarship dollars.
- Assisted in developing UM Advancement fundraising metrics and best practices.

2008-2014 Oklahoma State University Foundation Stillwater, OK

Senior Director of Development & Team Lead for the College of Engineering Architecture and Technology (2012-2014), Director of Development (2010-2012), Associate Director of Development (2008-2010)

- Directed major gift fundraising for the college-based fundraising team, grew the team from 2 to 9 members.
- Played a major role in the college raising over \$160 million in six years and personally raised \$120 million.
- Supported the Dean, prepared fundraising plans, briefings, proposals, scheduled development calls, solicitations and completed follow-up steps.
- Identified and later worked with the college and foundation leadership team to secure the largest single gift to the college of \$70 million.
- Staffed the college Dean, OSU President, and Provost on solicitation calls with key prospects.
- Researched 900+ college scholarships to improve awarding and stewardship processes. As a result a new position was created for scholarship compliance and stewardship.
- Re-engaged the thirteen college department heads, as well as departmental faculty, and helped establish fundraising goals that aligned with the Dean's vision.

2004-2008 OSU Center for Health Sciences

Tulsa, OK

Coordinator for Communities of Excellence Program

- Increased program funding from an initial grant of \$100K to \$275K within the first three years.
- Grant writing, solicitation of matching gifts, sponsorships, and volunteer support for various events to grow and expand the program.
- Received Rising Star Award from State Department of Health.
- Grew team from one to four staff members/student workers.
- Worked with city Majors, City Councils, Schools, and administrators to change county health policies.
- Led all aspects of public relations and project management.

- Built partnerships with community agencies, community leaders, educational institutions, city and state officials, groups, and individuals.

2001-2003 R&B Outdoors

Stillwater, OK

Vice President

- Solicited and obtained \$250K in venture capital dollars for R&B and other venture companies.
- Was responsible for company development, product design, packaging, tradeshow, marketing, and manufacturing.
- Created and implemented marketing, worked with media outlets to create on-air advertisements and product placement.
- Developed and facilitated company partnerships, along with accountability to venture funders.
- Supervised day-to-day operations, budget, sales, quality control, interviews, and payroll.

EDUCATION

M.S., Family Sciences, Oklahoma State University, 1999.

B.A., Psychology, Oklahoma State University, 1996.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES

- Forbes Magazine Panelist “Solving for Tech’s Gender Gap.” 2021
- Plus Delta Management Program of Frontline Fundraisers
- Association of Fundraising Professionals
- CASE Member
- Master Executive Leadership Training