

McMaster University



POSITION PROFILE

Associate Vice President, Alumni Engagement McMaster University

PHC
PRESTON HUMAN CAPITAL GROUP



Position Overview



Organization:	McMaster University
Title:	Associate Vice President, Alumni Engagement
Reports To:	Vice President, Advancement
Key Internal Relationships:	President, Deans, Senate and Alumni Association Board of Directors
Key External Relationships:	200,000 (and growing) McMaster alumni, worldwide
Team:	Nine direct, 32 overall (organization chart included below)
Location:	McMaster University, 1280 Main Street West, Hamilton, Ontario. Three – Four days per week on site in Hamilton.
Compensation:	\$177,000 - \$221,000 plus fulsome benefits (details below)

Is This You?



You are a strategic, collaborative and high impact leader. You have deep experience leading and developing high performing teams and are known for your inclusive co-creation approach. You have high standards and are known for creating a culture of excellence and innovation. You are an excellent communicator and don't operate in a silo. Through your approachable nature and commitment to excellence you attract a following – people want to work with and for you because of how you treat others – you aren't transactional, you are the ultimate people person. You have a natural ability to connect with all types and are genuinely interested in learning about others. You are an able connector, an excellent conversationalist, and you enjoy developing deep and meaningful relationships. You are thoughtful, genuine and sincere. You know how to work a room and are comfortable speaking in front of large audiences. Nothing brings you more joy than bringing a community together.

You would be energized to step into a vital leadership role at Canada's most innovative University, leading their alumni engagement strategy as they embark on a historic

campaign that will shape the future of the University and its community for years to come.

If this sounds like you, read on.

About McMaster University



Founded in 1887, McMaster University is a research-intensive public university. McMaster is dedicated to advancing human and societal health and well-being. McMaster is ranked in the world's Top 80 publicly funded universities by the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings.

With a total student population of more than 37,000, McMaster welcomes students from 120 countries as well as Canada. Home to more than 70 research centres and institutes, McMaster University is comprised of the six faculties of Business (DeGroote School of Business), Engineering, Health Science, Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences. McMaster's 30-acre main campus, located in the Westdale neighbourhood of Hamilton, Ontario, is comprised of 300 acres of scenic property at the western end of Lake Ontario, between Toronto and Niagara Falls. McMaster University also has three other regional campuses: Burlington, Kitchener- Waterloo, and Niagara.

Advancement & Alumni Engagement at McMaster University

McMaster's vibrant student experience, world-class research, and community engagement are empowered by the support of thousands of alumni and donors who also believe strongly in McMaster. Together, McMaster's donors and alumni help make the university what it is today and help nurture the next generation of leaders in our world.

The Advancement leadership team provides overall strategic leadership and direction in the areas of fundraising; developing and building partnerships; and engaging with donors, alumni and stakeholders. The Advancement team also plays a critically important role in advancing McMaster's strategy, in support of McMaster's ambitious vision, in partnership with the academic and administrative leaders across the University. The Advancement team has a centralized/decentralized structure, with strategies established and coordinated centrally, along with some programs and services (e.g. Annual Giving, Leadership Giving, Principal Giving, Corporate Giving, Estate Giving & Legacy Planning, Stewardship, overarching Alumni programs, Research & Prospect Analytics, and Gift Processing services), whereas other programs and services are delivered 'locally' through decentralized, dedicated Development and Alumni staff embedded within the faculties and units. You can learn more about the alumni program by [clicking here](#).

Leadership



Lili Litwin, Vice President, University Advancement

Lili Litwin joined McMaster on June 1, 2023, as McMaster's new Vice-President, University Advancement.

As a leading Canadian advancement expert, Litwin has worked across the research, hospital, charitable and university sectors. In addition to serving as executive director of Advancement at the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, she spent five years as president of the St. Michael's Foundation at St. Michael's Hospital and Providence Healthcare, Unity Health Toronto. In both roles, she led fundraising campaigns that surpassed their goals, developed strong and diverse advancement teams, and liaised with academic partners on governance and donor stewardship.

Lili graduated from York University with a B.Ed. Her earlier work experience includes time as Vice- President of Development at the Canadian Centre for Diversity and with ONEXONE, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children in health and education.

The Position & Organization Chart

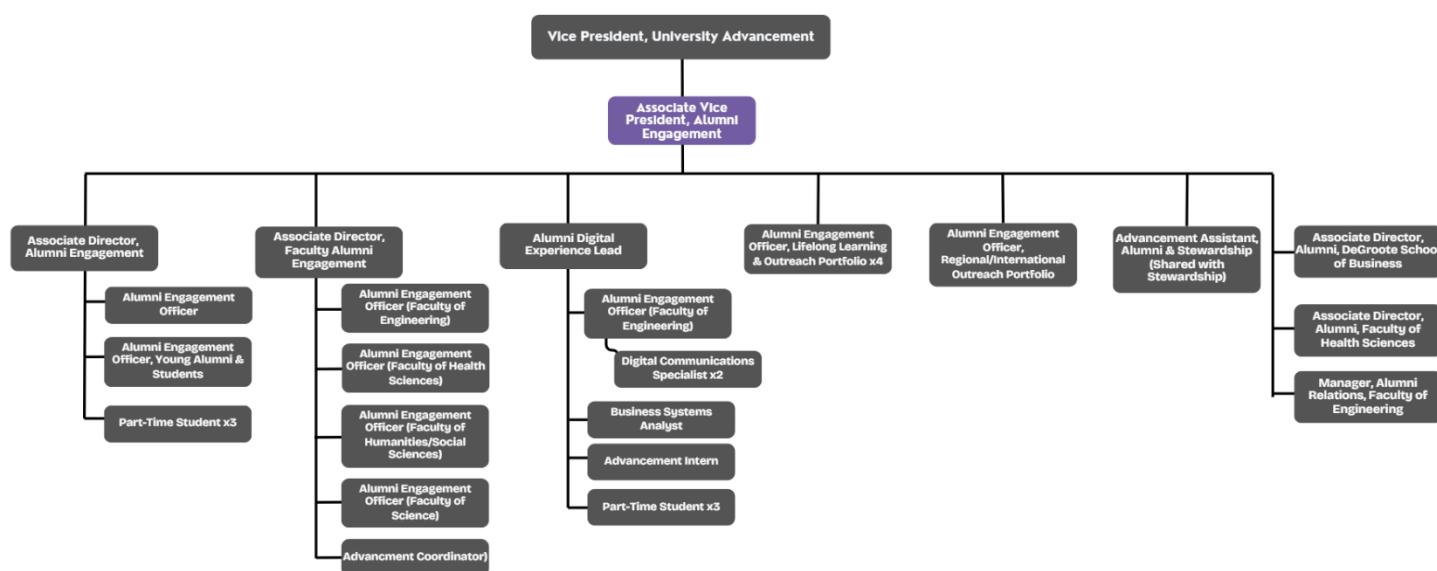


The Associate Vice President, Alumni Engagement is a senior strategic leader and will provide a vision to foster lifelong relationships between the University and its alumni, and friends. This role is responsible for developing and implementing McMaster University's comprehensive institution-wide alumni engagement strategy that supports institutional goals in alumni relations, volunteerism, and philanthropy. This role comes at a defining moment for the University, as it prepares to launch its most ambitious philanthropic campaign and reimagines how alumni can shape the future of McMaster through advocacy, insight, and support. As the alumni population grows in size, diversity, and global reach, this role is critical to ensuring alumni are seen and engaged as vital partners in the University's success.

The incumbent will provide strategic planning for, and integration of, complex sub-functions across Advancement and the wider University. This includes directing annual planning cycles, aligning alumni engagement with competing institutional priorities, and contributing to strategic policy development with long-term and precedent-setting impact.

Drawing on strong foundations, the Associate Vice President (AVP), Alumni Engagement will lead the evolution of alumni engagement from a well-regarded programme to a transformative force that enhances McMaster's global reputation, student recruitment, graduate employability, and philanthropic success. The role brings to life the [new President's](#) vision of a community that remains meaningfully connected for life – one where alumni are integral to McMaster's societal impact and mission delivery.

As a member of the senior leadership of the Advancement portfolio, the AVP, Alumni Engagement will lead a high-performing team, they will collaborate across faculties and functions, and champion innovation in alumni engagement.



Key Accountabilities



Strategic Leadership and Institutional Alignment

- Develop and communicate the long-term strategic direction for alumni engagement, aligned with McMaster's institutional goals and campaign ambitions ensuring that engagement is deepened and aligned with McMaster's institutional priorities and upcoming campaign
- Deliver a comprehensive alumni engagement strategy that advances the University's reputation, research strengths, student recruitment, and graduate employability.

- Lead the creation and implementation of divisional policies and objectives that support long-term impact, equity, and innovation.
- Guide institutional-level strategic initiatives, ensuring alumni engagement informs policy development, campaign readiness, and societal outcomes.
- Advise senior leaders including the President, Provost, Deans, and Vice-Presidents — on the strategic value of alumni engagement and its integration across University priorities.
- Regularly presents to Board committees, and provides strategic counsel to governance bodies, and contributes to decisions with long-term institutional impact.

Advancement Integration and Campaign Leadership

- As part of the AVP team within Advancement, the role works in partnership with peer AVPs to shape a coherent, Pan-University strategy for engagement and philanthropy.
- Serve as a core member of the Advancement leadership team, working closely with colleagues across fundraising, donor relations, and communications.
- Lead the integration of alumni engagement with fundraising, including annual giving, major gifts, and legacy giving, ensuring alignment with supporter journeys.
- Lead Alumni function in a complex environment with both centrally and faculty embedded Alumni roles, ensuring McMaster's Alumni vision and strategy is consistent across the institution and influencing a complex network of stakeholders.
- Play a key leadership role in McMaster's upcoming campaign, crafting a compelling 'case for engagement' that complements the case for support and invites alumni contributions of time, talent, and philanthropy.

Alumni Experience and Community Engagement

- Alongside the team, design and deliver inclusive alumni programmes that foster pride, belonging, and lifelong connection.
- Champion innovative forms of engagement through networks, digital platforms, and volunteering.
- Ensure alumni engagement contributes to McMaster's goals in student success, equity, recruitment, and employability.
- Provide advice, guidance and organizational support to the McMaster Alumni Association including guidance to the President, Executive and Board of Directors of the McMaster Alumni Association.
- Represent the University at alumni events locally, nationally, and internationally.

Organizational Leadership and Team Development

- Lead and mentor a multi-tiered team of directors, managers, and staff, fostering a high-performance culture of collaboration, inclusion, innovation, and continuous learning.
- Mentor senior managers and build leadership capacity through succession planning, coaching, and career development.
- Guide the evolution of faculty-based alumni roles to ensure strategic alignment and consistent practice across the University.
- Provide inspiration and feedback to alumni professionals across McMaster, supporting local engagement while advancing central objectives.

Digital Transformation and Insight-Led Practice

- Lead the digital transformation of alumni engagement, including CRM use, digital communications, and AI-supported analytics to assess engagement effectiveness and inform strategic data driven decisions.
- Promote data-driven approaches to segmentation, supporter journeys, and impact measurement.
- Establish and monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) for alumni engagement.
- Leverage technology to deliver scalable, personalised, and hybrid engagement experiences.

Oversight and Resource Stewardship

- Oversee day-to-day and long-term operations within alumni engagement, ensuring alignment with institutional standards and Advancement best practice.
- Drive continuous improvement and innovation through insight-led and adaptive leadership.
- Manage a multi-million-dollar budget, ensuring responsible resource use, return on investment, and alignment with campaign priorities.

Governance, Policy, and Institutional Engagement

- Act as executive lead to the McMaster Alumni Association Board, supporting effective governance and alignment with University strategy.
- Contribute actively to University-Wide policy development and represent alumni engagement at executive forums.
- Advise and support PVP (President Vice President) and Board committees on alumni-related matters.
- Develop and uphold University-Wide policies and standards for alumni engagement.

The Ideal Candidate



Key Qualifications

- Completion of a Bachelor degree at minimum. A Master's degree would be considered desirable.
- CFRE designation desirable.
- 10+ years of progressive leadership experience in alumni relations, advancement, or related sectors, including executive-level accountability.
- Experience working closely with a President, Vice-President, Dean, or senior executive leader is required.
- Strong knowledge of the post-secondary sector and current trends in North American Advancement is considered an asset.
- Ability to think creatively, strategic thinking and experience in developing and executing strategic plans, annual plans in a complex organization.
- Demonstrated success in leading and executing change.
- Extensive people and relationship management skills and demonstrated through past responsibilities.
- Deeply familiar with and responsive to the priorities / motivations of academic leaders and researchers in a university setting.
- Exercises excellent diplomacy and judgment while navigating difficult situations.
- Ability to listen, compile learnings from, and influence key stakeholders
- Comfortable in international settings and working with a variety of cultures – second language is an asset.
- Superior interpersonal and communication skills, including exceptional presentation and public speaking skills – comfort and ability to adapt speaking style to different sizes and types of audience.
- Strong organization skills and proven track record of succeeding in managing complex and competing deadlines in a fast-paced role and environment.
- Demonstrated experience shaping and executing strategy with institution-wide impact.
- Proven commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigenous engagement.
- Expertise in digital engagement, data analytics, and supporter experience design.

Leadership Competencies

- Strategic Outcome Orientation: Delivers value through systemic, long-term institutional outcomes, rather than short-term operational outputs.
- Systemic Integration: Oversees executive-level integration of multiple sub-functions to ensure strategic alignment across Advancement and the wider University.
- Strategic Governance Influence: Regularly advises and influences the President, Board, and other executive leaders; decisions are often precedent-setting and long-term in impact.
- Executive Collaboration: Plays a leadership role on the Advancement leadership team and contributes strategic counsel to the University's most senior leaders.
- Governance Stewardship: Acts as a trusted advisor and liaison to the Alumni Association Board, fostering aligned governance and impactful alumni partnership.
- Strategic Vision: Shapes institution-wide engagement strategy and priorities.
- Collaborative Influence: Builds trusted relationships with academic and administrative leaders. Exceptional level collaboration with stakeholders across the institution and direct and indirect reporting relationships.
- Innovation and Agility: Champions digital transformation and continuous improvement.
- Results Orientation: Aligns resources to institutional goals and evaluates impact rigorously.
- Inclusive Leadership: Builds diverse, empowered teams and inclusive alumni communities.

Knowledge and Skills Required

- Advanced expertise in navigating competing strategic objectives across a large, decentralised institution.
- Experience leading precedent-setting, high-impact institutional change initiatives at the executive level.
- Deep understanding of alumni engagement strategy, advancement principles, and the evolving role of alumni in post-secondary institutions.
- Demonstrated expertise in strategic planning, policy development, and leading institution-wide initiatives.
- Strong political acumen and the ability to navigate complex stakeholder environments with diplomacy and credibility.
- Exceptional communication, influence, and relationship-building skills, including the ability to brief and advise senior executive leaders and governance bodies.
- High-level capability in data analysis, digital engagement platforms, and customer relationship management (CRM) systems.

- A track record of leading innovation and driving systemic change in large, complex organisations.
- Strong financial management and resource allocation skills to ensure strategic alignment and ROI.
- A sophisticated understanding of governance structures, board management, and alumni association leadership.

Working at McMaster University



At McMaster, you will find a community of talented individuals who are inspired by the University's Mission and the sense of purpose this mission brings. It is through these talented individuals, their creativity and drive for results that McMaster University has earned its reputation as being Canada's "most innovative" University.

Leaders in The Senior Administrative Leader Group are vital contributors to McMaster's renowned culture of creativity, innovation and excellence. They demonstrate the value they place on their leaders with a highly competitive total rewards package featuring compensation, well-being, growth and inclusion provisions.

McMaster University strives to embody the values of integrity, quality, inclusiveness and teamwork, and has a strong commitment to employment equity. Building an inclusive community with a shared purpose is something that McMaster University prioritizes. They believe it is important for their workforce to reflect the diversity of their students and community. The diversity of their workforce is at the core of their innovation and creativity and is a key area that strengthens their research capabilities and teaching excellence.

Compensation & Benefits

To learn more about the total rewards available to the successful candidate, please access McMaster's [interactive guide](#) with a summary of the compensation, benefits, retirement income, work life, development and career opportunities, and performance and recognition provisions offered at McMaster. To further explore the extensive total rewards program, detailed information can be accessed through the links throughout the guide. The hiring range for this position is \$177,000 - \$221,000 plus a performance pay bonus eligibility of up to 10% of base salary, along with an excellent [benefits package](#).

Application Instructions



The University seeks qualified candidates who share their commitment to equity and inclusion, who will contribute to the diversification of ideas and perspectives, and especially welcomes applications from indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) peoples, members of racialized communities, persons with disabilities, women, and persons who identify as 2SLGBTQ+.

Preston Human Capital Group has been retained to conduct this search on behalf of McMaster University. If you would like to apply, please send your CV and cover letter to **Lindsay Preston (lindsay@phcap.ca) by December 19, 2025, at 5pm ET.** Accommodation is available on request for candidates taking part in all aspects of the selection process. If you require any accommodation, please notify Lindsay Preston.

McMaster University is located on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and Mississauga Nations and within the lands protected by the “Dish With One Spoon” wampum agreement. The diversity of their workforce is at the core of their innovation and creativity and strengthens their research and teaching excellence. In keeping with its Statement on Building an Inclusive Community with a Shared Purpose, McMaster University strives to embody the values of respect, collaboration and diversity and has a strong commitment to employment equity.

We thank you in advance for your interest. Only qualified candidates will be contacted.