
Event Agenda

NACRO 2025 Annual Conference

Tuesday, July 15, 2025

Bootcamp - Breakfast

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

Bootcamp - Welcome from NACRO Co-Presidents

8:30 AM – 8:50 AM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

Speakers



Tim Hausman

Executive Director, Principal Gifts and Corporate Giving | University of Texas - El Paso



Priya Baboo

Senior Director, Corporate and Industry Engagement | The Pennsylvania State University

Bootcamp - Networking: Corporate Relations Human Bingo

8:50 AM – 9:15 AM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

Bootcamp - Intro to Corporate Relations & What it Means at Your Institution

9:15 AM – 10:00 AM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

The structure of corporate relations offices and their associated responsibilities differ greatly from one university to another. This foundational presentation will first describe current corporate relations models and discuss the variables that influence structure. Following this session, attendees will have a corporate relations knowledge base to apply to their specific landscape.

Moderator



Richard Potter

Principal Consultant | RP Corporate Relations

Speakers



Sara Garvey

Director, Corporate Relations | Syracuse University



Priya Baboo

Senior Director, Corporate and Industry Engagement | The Pennsylvania State University



Heather Kimmett

Executive Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations | Idaho State University

Bootcamp - Break & Move Tables

10:00 AM – 10:20 AM | Location: Roanoke Foyer

BOOTCAMP

Bootcamp - Building Mutually Beneficial Corporate Partnerships

10:20 AM – 11:20 AM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

Corporate Relations professionals must balance the varied interests and goals of their corporate partners while addressing the many priorities and needs of their institutions. Drawing from success stories within the NACRO community, this session will provide insights to help you identify and/or create alignment between corporate and institutional success.

Speakers



Barry Dickerson

Managing Director of Corporate Relations | University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Gies College of Business



Nate Addington

Senior Director of External Relations and Community Engagement | University of Missouri-Kansas City



Jen Cadman

Director, Strategic Partnerships | Carnegie Mellon University, Tepper School of Business

Senior Leaders Network - Welcome & Introductions

10:45 AM – 11:20 AM | Location: Shawnee

ADVANCED CAREER TRACK

NACRO's Professional Education Committee is excited to announce the inaugural Advanced Career Track (ACT) pre-conference session for the 2025 Annual Conference, the Senior Leaders Network. This educational programming is specifically designed for NACRO members with 10+ years of experience in the corporate relations arena.

Attendees are generally characterized by the following criteria:

10+ years in an external-facing university role

5+ years in a senior role, managing a team in an academic environment with corporate engagement work or serving as the senior leader solely responsible for a unit.

Responsible for setting the corporate strategy for your unit or your institution

Focusing on large-scale comprehensive partnerships, holistic proposals

Orchestrating complex, multifaceted deals; frequently navigating intricate cross-disciplinary relationships and conversations.

Actively managing a portfolio of top corporate partners.

Consistent interaction with institutional leaders (i.e. president, vice presidents, deans)

There is no cost to attend the 2025 inaugural session, though participation is through application only. Applications will open in mid-April and run through May 19th. Spots are limited and applications may close before that date if the session is at capacity.

Accepted applicants will be notified no later than June 2nd.

Questions? Contact the ACT Committee/Professional Education Committee at [info@nacrocon.org].

Speakers



Megan Greenawalt

Senior Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, Health Sciences | University of Pittsburgh



Lorena McLaren

Managing Senior Director, Corporate & Foundation Relations | Emory University

Bootcamp Lunch - 'Top of Mind' Questions, and Advanced Career Networking

11:20 AM – 12:20 PM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

During lunch, attendees will gather at tables to get to know each other better and discuss the questions that are at the top of their minds going into the conference. NACRO Advanced Career members will be joining each of the tables to share their corporate relations experience and be available to answer questions. Attendees will have the opportunity to share topics about which they want to learn more, seek advice, or simply discuss and solicit feedback. Attendees are also encouraged to share their questions via the conference app for distribution to a wider audience.

Senior Leaders Network - Lunch with NACRO Bootcamp Attendees

11:20 AM – 12:20 PM | Location: Liberty

ADVANCED CAREER TRACK

Bootcamp - Providing the Whole CR Package

12:20 PM – 1:40 PM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

This session will guide you through the Art of the Deal. When do you push the ROI? When do you back off and take it slow? What do you do when the "deal" is getting diverted by a well-meaning but anxious faculty member who doesn't have the strategic picture in mind? This HIGHLY interactive session will combine success stories, tales of woe, essential skill sets necessary for Corporate Relations officers to navigate curveballs, and maybe even a little role play, to demonstrate proven techniques to close the deal.

Speaker



Jason King

University of California, Irvine

Senior Leaders Network - Changemakers Panel

12:30 PM – 1:15 PM | Location: Shawnee

ADVANCED CAREER TRACK

Change can be difficult. How do you advocate for change? How do you adapt when change happens to you? This panel discussion will feature advanced career leaders giving insight on what they have found to be best practices, key steps, and common threads. The session will include Q&A and discussion with cohort participants.

Speakers



Wendy Wendland Elder

Senior Director of Corporate Strategy | The University of Texas at Austin



Annette Forst

Vice President of Development | Texas A&M Foundation



Mark Nolan

Associate President, Office of Corporate Engagement | Georgia Institute of Technology

Moderators



Lorena McLaren

Managing Senior Director, Corporate & Foundation Relations | Emory University



Megan Greenawalt

Senior Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, Health Sciences | University of Pittsburgh

Senior Leaders Network - Managing Your Team and Their Personalities

1:15 PM – 2:30 PM | Location: Shawnee

ADVANCED CAREER TRACK

Do you know your own management style? How do you adapt approaches to best get work done and keep people motivated? In this session, participants will be divided into groups, and each will be provided with an example management scenario and asked to share how they would handle the situation. Attendees will then have an opportunity after each answer to provide additional suggestions on how to approach the situation to further the discussion. There's no "right answer" but different considerations will help us grow as managers together.

Bootcamp - Break & Move Tables

1:40 PM – 2:00 PM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

Bootcamp - Stewarding Your Corporate Partners

2:00 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

Stewardship is the responsible management of entrusted resources. In corporate relations, it's crucial not only to seek new partnerships but also to nurture existing ones. The purpose of stewardship is to focus on key interactions between the university and company, such as recruiting, research, procurement, alumni employees, leadership engagement, and giving. Stewardship plays a key role when cultivating and expanding corporate partnerships. This session will highlight best practices and examples of stewardship from different higher education institutions.

Speakers



Rosie Pinedo

University of Texas at Austin



Audrey Metcalf

Associate Director, Corporate Relations | Washington University in St. Louis

Senior Leaders Network - Break

2:30 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Roanoke Foyer

ADVANCED CAREER TRACK

Senior Leaders Network - What Keeps You Up at Night as an Advanced Career Professional?

2:45 PM – 4:15 PM | Location: Shawnee

ADVANCED CAREER TRACK

Do you ever feel like you need a "therapy session" with peers? Come with your challenges and frustrations to gain feedback/camaraderie/suggestions from the group. Questions will be solicited in advance of the session, and participants will break into small groups for deeper discussions around themes that emerge. During the session, attendees will have the ability to move around the room and participate in multiple group discussions in an effort to help them sleep more soundly and avoid sleepless nights.

Bootcamp - Corporate Relations from a Corporate Perspective (Industry panel)

2:45 PM – 3:45 PM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

No discussion of best practices for university corporate relations would be complete without a corporate perspective. What are companies looking for out of their engagement with universities? What's the best way to begin the conversation with prospective corporate partners, and with whom? How do companies work to align recruiting, sponsored research, executive education, and philanthropy? This session will feature a panel of corporate relations partners to answer these and other questions to help guide you in your growth as a Corporate Relations professional.

Moderator



Yolanda Norman, Ed.D.

Regional Director of Corporate Partnerships - Houston, TX | Vanderbilt University

Speakers



Gabriel Hernandez

Vice President | Burns & McDonnell



Rachel Merlo

Head Of Government And Community Affairs - Central Region and Orange County, CA | Head Of Local Government Affairs Strat...



Kyle Vena

University of Missouri-Kansas City | Trustee Chair, New Paradigm for Company Connections Task Force

Bootcamp - Questions & Closing

3:45 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Liberty

BOOTCAMP

Speakers



Tim Hausman

Executive Director, Principal Gifts and Corporate Giving | University of Texas - El Paso



Priya Baboo

Senior Director, Corporate and Industry Engagement | The Pennsylvania State University

NACRO Board of Directors Meeting (outgoing Board)

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM | Location: Penn Valley

Conference Registration

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM | Location: Century Ballroom Foyer

Senior Leaders Network - Closing

4:15 PM – 4:30 PM | Location: Shawnee

ADVANCED CAREER TRACK

Transition to Welcoming Plenary of the 2025 Annual NACRO Conference

UMKC Welcome Plenary Session - Starting From Scratch: Leveraging Trustee Influence to Build a Holistic Corporate Relations Model From the Ground Up

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM | Location: Century Ballroom

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

In the fall of 2023, The University of Missouri- Kansas City (UMKC) Division of External Relations and Constituent Engagement began collaborating with the UMKC Trustees to develop a corporate relations model that fostered deeper and more meaningful engagement with local and regional businesses and that streamlined and optimized UMKC's interaction with the corporate community.

Participants in this section will gain insight into the national benchmarking work done by the group on holistic corporate relations models and hear from industry partners on the UMKC Board of Trustees about their needs (and frustrations) in working with higher education.

Moderator



Nate Addington

Senior Director of External Relations and Community Engagement | University of Missouri-Kansas City

Panelists



Kyle Vena

University of Missouri-Kansas City | Trustee Chair, New Paradigm for Company Connections Task Force



Grace DiFranco

Talent Acquisition Program Specialist | Custom Truck One Source



Dr. Leigh Anne Taylor Knight

Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, The DeBruce Foundation | UMKC Trustee, The DeBruce Foundation



Debby Ballard

Founder and President | The Ballard Connection, Former Trustee Board Chair



Rachel Beichley

UMKC Trustee, Practice Group Director | Littler

Welcome Reception

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM | Location: Century Ballroom Foyer

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

Conference Registration

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM | Location: Century Ballroom Foyer

Breakfast

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM | Location: Century Ballroom

Welcome

8:00 AM – 8:15 AM | Location: Century Ballroom

Plenary Panel: A Changing Landscape

8:15 AM – 9:25 AM | Location: Century Ballroom

Please note that in order to promote open and candid dialogue, this plenary session will be considered a **closed door** session. Please refrain from marketing or social media posts regarding this panel.

The political landscape has undergone significant changes, and with it, the expectations of businesses and higher education institutions are evolving. In this session, we will explore how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is being reshaped in response to the changing political climate, and how strategic collaborations between corporations and universities are evolving as a result. The discussion will center around the role of businesses in fostering positive social impact and forming meaningful partnerships with universities that align with both corporate social responsibility goals as well as university fundraising and community impact goals.

Moderator



Dr. David Ortendahl

Director, Corporate & Foundation Relations | The University of Connecticut (UConn) Foundation

Panelists



Alisia Atwater

Executive Director, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion | Cummins



Danielle Macklin

DEI Program Manager | Teradyne



Melanie Newell

President | Rocket Social Impact



Carolyn Watley

Vice President of Community Engagement | CBIZ

From Vision to Action: Advancing UT Austin's Strategic Corporate Partnerships

9:35 AM – 10:30 AM | Location: Liberty

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

Last year, The University of Texas at Austin embarked on a journey to understand how best to position UT Austin as an educational partner of choice for companies looking to partner with purpose and invest in the University. This year, we have transitioned from discovery to action, implementing the plan developed during our journey to accelerate and enhance how we partner with industry through research, talent, and philanthropy to ultimately change the world. Building on the insights gathered last year, we are actively operationalizing our roadmap to enhance campus experiences and deepen strategic corporate partnerships.

Speaker



Wendy Wendland Elder

Senior Director of Corporate Strategy | The University of Texas at Austin

Enhancing Your Personal Effectiveness Using Proven Relational Sales Techniques

9:35 AM – 10:30 AM | Location: Shawnee Mission

SKILLS WORKSHOPS

University corporate relations officers must focus on serving existing relationships as well as navigating new and emerging avenues of partnerships to keep up with institutional expectations. These corporate engagement leaders must identify growth opportunities and align academic resources against them to succeed. The general theme of this session will be discussing proven relational sales techniques to help attendees develop and cultivate their brand, utilize technologies, recognize the value of team selling, and enhance outreach skills that align with their institutions' objectives.

The session will provide participants with opportunities to enrich their decision-making to focus on the appropriate partnership pursuits that help them sustain competitive advantage. University and context-specific examples will be discussed to augment the learning experience.

Speaker



Raj Agnihotri

Dean of the Ivy College of Business | Iowa State University

Moderator



Mark Boeck

Senior Executive Director, Corporate Engagement | Iowa State University Foundation

Transforming Vision into Value: Strategic Proposal Development

9:35 AM – 10:30 AM | Location: Pershing Place North

SKILLS WORKSHOPS

As corporate and foundation professionals, transforming ideas into fundable projects often demands strategic evaluation, thoughtful planning, and effective collaboration. This session equips participants with tools to refine proposal development and secure funding for transformative initiatives. Attendees will learn to evaluate institutional priorities, identify high-impact projects, and craft compelling proposals. Additionally, attendees will explore strategies to lead stakeholder conversations, set clear expectations with partners, and avoid common proposal pitfalls. This session delivers actionable insights to enhance your impact and drive success with institutional partners.

Speaker



Lauren Loper

Director of Foundation Engagement | Texas State University

Sponsor Session: FirstIgnite - Beyond the Click: How AI Agents Will Transform Corporate Engagement & Unlock New Value for Your University

9:35 AM – 10:30 AM | Location: Pershing Place East & West

AI is evolving beyond simple tools and chatbots into autonomous agents that can understand goals, execute complex tasks, and adapt over time. For universities, this shift offers a powerful way to accelerate corporate engagement, automate time-consuming workflows, and uncover new opportunities within their research ecosystems.

In this session, FirstIgnite will showcase how AI agents are redefining university-industry partnerships. Learn how this emerging technology can help your team work smarter, focus on high-value strategy, and deliver faster impact for your institution.

Speaker



Cody Pawlowski

Co-Founder & CTO | FirstIgnite

Break

10:30 AM – 10:40 AM | Location: Century Ballroom Foyer

Advanced Career Track: Metrics and Measurement for Senior Leaders

10:40 AM – 11:35 AM | Location: Pershing Place East & West

ADVANCED CAREER TRACK

This session is intended for advanced career professionals and senior leaders

Beyond measuring the traditional data, what SHOULD we be measuring to effectively demonstrate the impact of our teams? This session will focus on the work unique to experienced leaders, including measuring what you are being asked to do even when that doesn't align with traditional metrics, how to work across campus when your collaborators are chasing metrics, and how to create metrics that bridge and foster productive collaboration.

Speakers



Charley Hasemann

Associate Vice President for Innovation and Economic Development | Michigan State University



Barry Dickerson

Managing Director of Corporate Relations | University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Gies College of Business



Theresa Menk

Assistant Vice Chancellor Corporate and Foundation Relations | Washington University in St. Louis

Moderator



Megan Greenawalt

Senior Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, Health Sciences | University of Pittsburgh

Small Shop, Big Results: Tools and Techniques to Survive and Thrive in CR

10:40 AM – 11:35 AM | Location: Shawnee Mission

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS SKILLS WORKSHOPS

As Higher Education Corporate Relations offices face increasing demands with limited or no direct report staff, there are still tools and techniques to achieve your goals. This session will explore strategies and practical tools that small CR shops can utilize to enhance strategic partnerships, prioritize effectively, leverage technology, maintain their passion for their work, and develop meaningful outcomes. The goal is to equip CR professionals with tools to thrive in a resource-constrained environment. It is also designed to

energize attendees with practical discussions and real-world advice to make it in the wonderful CR space.

Speaker



Deidra Diaz

Associate Senior Director, Corporate and Foundation Relations | The University of Alabama

AURP-NACRO: The Return-on-Investment of Innovation Districts and Research Parks

10:40 AM – 11:35 AM | Location: Pershing Place North

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

AURP-NACRO: The Return-on-Investment of Innovation Districts and Research Parks

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Joseph Huang, Executive Director, Stanford University
- Brian Darmody, Chief Strategy Officer, AURP
- Alison Doyle, Associate Director, Iowa State University Research Park

Research parks and innovation districts have a positive return-on-investment for the university and region, but it is not widely known. In this joint presentation from AURP and NACRO, we will present the latest overview of innovation districts and their economic impacts and how headwinds in federal funding opportunities are affecting universities and research parks.

Speakers



Joseph Huang

Executive Director of Strategic Research Initiatives - Computer Science | Stanford University



Alison Doyle

Associate Director | Iowa State University Research Park

Co-speaker



Brian Darmody

Association of University Research Parks

Enhancing Collaboration Between Corporate Relations, Career Services, and Advancement Offices

10:40 AM – 11:35 AM | Location: Liberty

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

This session will provide examples on how the University of Illinois central Office of Corporate Relations and Syracuse University Martin J. Whitman School of Management Corporate Relations office are each working to build cross-campus relationships with colleagues in Career Services and also Advancement. Session attendees will hear how each R1 institution is working internally to build and grow meaningful relationships and networks and work together to better the institution as a whole to maximize student outcomes, enhance alumni engagement and corporate partnerships, and support institutional growth.

Speaker



Sara Garvey

Director, Corporate Relations | Syracuse University

Co-speaker



Stephanie Larson

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Individual Networking Opportunities

11:45 AM – 12:15 PM | Location: Century Ballroom Foyer

Lunch, NACRO Business Meeting and Awards

12:15 PM – 1:30 PM | Location: Century Ballroom

NACRO Business Meeting

12:30 PM – 1:05 PM

NACRO Awards

1:05 PM – 1:30 PM

So You Want To Be A Senior Leader

1:40 PM – 2:35 PM | Location: Liberty

SKILLS WORKSHOPS

One day, you take a position in an academic corporate relations office, and a few years later, you realize that this may be your career. What is the pathway into a management role? What are the skills and qualifications that are essential to making you a successful candidate for mobility within your college or university? Do you even really want to *be* a senior leader?? This panel discussion will help you develop an action plan to achieve your goals.

Speakers



Emily Kelton

Assistant VP, Corporate & Foundation Relations & Office of Industry Relations | Colorado School of Mines



Whitney Riley

Associate Vice President, Corporate and Foundation Development | Kansas State University Foundation



Kimberly Jacobs

Assistant Dean for Development | FAMU-FSU College of Engineering

Moderator



Adam Bear

Assistant Director, Stewardship | University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Leveraging Academic Degree Programs for Corporate Engagement Success

1:40 PM – 2:35 PM | Location: Pershing Place East & West

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

For many companies, access to talent is what they are most interested in securing from a university partner. Yet, as degree-granting institutions, wouldn't it make sense for corporate partners to seek professional development for their current employees? Mercer University uses its myriad of programs/delivery platforms to effectively develop current and secure future corporate partnerships. You will hear from two seasoned higher education professionals: one in advancement/corporate engagement and another in enrollment management. They will discuss how they work together and across multiple academic units and campuses to develop and steward the Educational Learning Partnership (ELP).

Speaker



Allen London

Senior Associate Vice President & Director of University Corporate Engagement | Mercer University

Co-speaker



Theo Anderson

Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management | Mercer University

Developing Yourself as a Successful Corporate Relations Officer

1:40 PM – 2:35 PM | Location: Shawnee Mission

SKILLS WORKSHOPS

How did I get here and where do I start?

Where are my prospects? How do I find them? What prospects would be interested in partnering philanthropically with my higher education institution?

How do I find out what my prospects are interested in?

What can I do differently to attract and engage corporations to partner with us?

What determines success in my role?

Speakers



Annette Forst

Vice President of Development | Texas A&M Foundation



Jessie Albright

Senior Associate Director of Corporate Relations | Carnegie Mellon University

Fine, Performing and Liberal Arts: Leveraging Sometimes Overlooked Areas to Increase Corporate Dollars

1:40 PM – 2:35 PM | Location: Pershing Place North

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Fine, Performing, and Liberal Arts: Leveraging Sometimes Overlooked Areas to Increase Corporate Dollars explores how arts and humanities programs can attract corporate funding traditionally focused on STEM and business disciplines. By highlighting the strategic value of creativity, innovation, and cultural influence in corporate partnerships, we will demonstrate how tailored approaches aligned with corporate missions can drive mutual benefits. Through case studies, such as Wayne State University's cross-campus collaborations, the session will address challenges, like measuring ROI, and advocate for the arts as a vital component of corporate engagement and educational advancement.

Speaker



Danny DeRose

Associate Director of Fund Development | Wayne State University

Break

2:35 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Century Ballroom Foyer

Tiering Up: Using Data, Metrics, and Engagement Teams to Prioritize Holistic Corporate Outreach Activity

2:45 PM – 3:40 PM | Location: Liberty

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

Effective holistic corporate engagement is reliant on data to coordinate activities across complex institutions, as well as building trust among stakeholders. Academic corporate engagement offices are analyzing data to better understand their most valued partnerships and where time is best spent. The corporate engagement team at Iowa State University has developed unique approaches to their analysis and is actively using them to prioritize their work.

Speakers



Stacey Barnes

Sr. Director of Data Analytics & Strategic Insight | Iowa State University Foundation



Allison Bryant

Vice President of Corporate Relations | Howard University

Corporate Relations and the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

2:45 PM – 3:40 PM | Location: Pershing Place North

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Abstract

The world of academic corporate relations is ever-evolving, as are the metrics to measure corporate engagement's impact on the university and its stakeholders. Start-up activity and corporate co-location in university innovation centers are now being tracked in a growing number of university corporate relations units. This session will demonstrate the importance and value of regional and state-wide entrepreneurial ecosystems and share best practices for building an ecosystem to support startups, small businesses, and innovation centers. NACRO members will learn how these systems can be leveraged to support corporate engagement deliverables, and to support regional collaboratives that attract federal, state, and local government funding.

Session Details

The world of academic corporate relations is ever-evolving, as are the metrics to measure corporate engagement's impact on the university and its stakeholders. Start-up activity and corporate co-location in university innovation centers are now being tracked in a growing number of university corporate relations units. This panel discussion includes three members of SourceLink®, America's first platform for entrepreneur-led economic developers and e-community champions.

SourceLink began in 2003 as a startup enterprise housed in the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Since then, it has expanded into a national network and has assisted almost 200 organizations with entrepreneurship and community development initiatives. Many SourceLink members are housed in and/or supported by regional universities and university systems. SourceLink's expertise lies in the field of entrepreneurship-led economic development; the organization also supports data collection and analysis projects in other industries such as broadband, health care, experiential learning, and childcare.

The session will demonstrate the importance and value of regional and state-wide entrepreneurial ecosystems and share best practices for building an ecosystem to support startups, small businesses, and innovation centers. NACRO members will learn how these systems can be leveraged to support corporate engagement deliverables, and to support regional collaboratives that attract federal, state, and local government funding.

Key Takeaways

- The importance and value of regional and state-wide entrepreneurial ecosystems
- How universities and economic development offices are collaborating to map available resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs, including university startups
- Best practices for building an ecosystem to support startups, small businesses, and university innovation centers
- How corporate relations professionals can leverage a regional entrepreneurial ecosystem to support their deliverables and build regional collaboratives for federal agency funding proposals.

Panel moderator:

- [Maria Meyers](#), Vice Chancellor for Commercialization and Entrepreneurship, University of Missouri – Kansas City, and Executive Director of the UMKC Innovation Center.
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/meyersmaria/>

Panelists:

- Becca Castro, Ed.D., Senior Directory, KC SourceLink – University of Missouri – Kansas City <https://www.linkedin.com/in/becca-castro/>
- Patrick Luensmann, Director, IA SourceLink, University of Northern Iowa <https://www.linkedin.com/in/patrickluensmann/>
- Scott Asmus, SourceLink Nebraska Program Director, University of Nebraska System <https://www.linkedin.com/in/scott-asmus-748927109/>

Speakers



Maria Meyers
UMKC Innovation Center



Scott Asmus
SourceLink Nebraska/Nebraska Business Development Center



Rebecca Castro
KCSOURCELINK | UMKC Innovation Center



Patrick Luensmann
Director | IASOURCELINK, John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center

Strategic Corporate Engagement: Driving Innovation and Investment at the University of Minnesota

2:45 PM – 3:40 PM | Location: Pershing Place East & West

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Corporate Engagement Center (CEC), a partnership between the Research and Innovation Office (RIO) and the UM Foundation's Corporate Foundation Engagement team, connects top researchers and strategic initiatives with corporations locally and globally. Focused on a portfolio of 70+ strategic companies, including Minnesota's 17 Fortune 500s, CEC secured \$69M in investments and delivered multiple million-dollar proposals in 2024. In collaboration with RIO, CEC launched Innovation Minnesota—a council of technology leaders identifying tech needs and barriers to foster statewide innovation and startup growth.

Speaker



JoonHyung Cho
Assistant Vice President for Research and Innovation | University of Minnesota

Co-speaker



Steve Corkery
Vice President and Executive Director, Corporate Engagement Center | University of Minnesota

Better with Experience: The "Oops" We Learned from

2:45 PM – 3:40 PM | Location: Shawnee Mission

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Often, we all share our successes at conferences, and our organizations publish the big wins. Yet, we ALL know that we remember what went wrong often longer than we focus on what went right. Come hear our missteps, mistakes, and what we learned to make the next opportunity better. If you're brave enough, there will be plenty of time for everyone to learn from you, too.

Members of the KSUF team will share specific situations that didn't go as planned and the things we went through to get a gift, relationship, opportunity, back on track. What we learned along the way and new process, practices (both personal and organizational) that help us be better with the next partner.

Speaker



Galen Bunning
Sr. Director Of Corporate Relations | Kansas State University Foundation

Co-speakers



Rebecca Lester
Dir. of Foundation Relations | KSU Foundation



Tracy Robinson
Director of Corporate Development | Kansas State University Foundation



Whitney Riley
Associate Vice President, Corporate and Foundation Development | Kansas State University Foundation

Advanced Career Professionals - What is your Most Pressing Worry?

3:50 PM – 4:45 PM | Location: Pershing Place East & West

ADVANCED CAREER TRACK

*This session is intended for advanced career and senior leader professionals

Tackle the most pressing topics for advanced career professionals! Join this session for moderated small-group discussions focused on topics solicited in advance via the Whova app. Last year's suggestions included managing people and teams, AI and its place in corporate relations, transformational cross-campus deals, data sharing, and managing up and across. Leverage your NACRO peers to help you frame a topic, approach, or discussion – your input determines the final topics discussed!

Moderator



Emily Kelton
Assistant VP, Corporate & Foundation Relations & Office of Industry Relations | Colorado School of Mines

Corporate Relations Reimagined: How Academic Institutions Can Build Sustainable Industry Partnerships, a

NACRO White Paper

3:50 PM – 4:45 PM | Location: Pershing Place North

Join us for a session dedicated to our new strategic position paper, "CORPORATE RELATIONS REIMAGINED: How Academic Institutions Can Build Sustainable Industry Partnerships."

This is your chance to directly influence the direction of NACRO's benchmarking future work. After the presentation, we'll transition into an interactive feedback forum, where we'll ask you to share your insights and questions to help us identify where we should do a deeper dive.

Speakers



Angela Dudley

Sr AVP, Corporate Partnerships | Wichita State University: WSU Foundation & Alumni Engagement



Anne Borchert

Principal and Chief Reinvention Officer | AB3 Partners

Artificial Intelligence - A culmination session from ongoing virtual discussions

3:50 PM – 4:45 PM | Location: Liberty

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Curious about artificial intelligence but not sure where to start? This session will walk you through the basics of powerful AI tools. We'll show you how they work, and simple ways to start using them in your professional life. Whether you're drafting emails, summarizing documents, or brainstorming ideas, these tools can help you work smarter—not harder.

Speakers



Emily Witthohn

Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations | Elon University



Tammy Eickhoff

Director of Corporate And Foundation Relations | Mayo Clinic

Structuring a Corporate Recognition Program

3:50 PM – 4:45 PM | Location: Shawnee Mission

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

This session will explore how the Kuhlin Career Hub has developed and implemented a framework to both recognize and grow corporate partnerships. Through using a set of clear metrics across four categories, we are able to better understand the footprint of our corporate partners to ensure meaningful acknowledgment of their contributions while also providing a clear roadmap for growth. Attendees will learn how this framework simplifies complex partnerships into actionable steps, fostering deeper collaboration and mutual benefit. We will share practical insights, tools, and outcomes that have helped partners understand their current impact and identify opportunities for expanded engagement.

Speaker



Kerry Spitze

Senior Director, Corporate Partnerships | Bowling Green State University

Transportation to Offsite Reception - ZTrip

5:45 PM – 8:45 PM

ZTrip will us with shuttle service to and from the hotel to the offsite reception venue. The shuttles will be parked outside of the hotel on Pershing road.

Times below:

Start time - 5:45

End Time - 8:45

Offsite Reception

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM | Location: The College Basketball Experience

The College Basketball Experience

1401 Grand Boulevard, Kansas City, MO
64106

Thursday, July 17, 2025

Conference Registration

7:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: Century Ballroom Foyer

NACRO Board of Directors Meeting (incoming Board)

7:00 AM – 8:00 AM | Location: Penn Valley

Breakfast, Affinity Group/Regional Area Networking

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM | Location: Century Ballroom

Why Capstone Programs Matter and How to Grow the Capstone Ecosystem

9:00 AM – 9:55 AM | Location: Shawnee Mission

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Why Do University Capstone Programs Matter?

Real-World Experience

Problem-Solving Skills

Collaboration and Teamwork

Demonstration of Competency

Interdisciplinary Learning

Networking Opportunities

Community and Societal Impact

How to Scale Up University Capstone Programs?

1. Expand Industry Partnerships
2. Leverage Technology and Online Platforms
3. Create Cross-Disciplinary Teams
4. Increase Faculty and Mentor Engagement
5. Incorporate Real-Time Feedback
6. Offer Flexible and Modular Options
7. Encourage Inter-Institutional Collaboration
8. Provide Financial and Logistical Support
9. Measure and Communicate Impact
10. Streamline Administration and Coordination
11. Foster Alumni Engagement

Speakers



Jason King

University of California, Irvine



Christine Roth

RBI OSU



JoonHyung Cho

Assistant Vice President for Research and Innovation | University of Minnesota



Jessie Albright

Senior Associate Director of Corporate Relations | Carnegie Mellon University

Building Bridges, Not Risks: Corporate Due Diligence Explained

9:00 AM – 9:55 AM | Location: Liberty

SKILLS WORKSHOPS

This session equips university fundraisers with essential tools and insights for evaluating corporate partners. Attendees will explore the key components of due diligence, including risk assessment, ethical considerations, and the role of data in decision-making. Through real-world examples and practical strategies, participants will learn how to identify and mitigate risks while fostering trust and transparency in corporate relationships. By the end of the session, fundraisers will be empowered to confidently navigate complex corporate landscapes, ensuring partnerships align with institutional values and support long-term fundraising success.

Speaker



Kevin Vaughn

Research Analyst | University of Notre Dame

Gifts vs. Contracts: Your Role in a Sponsor-Centered Approach

9:00 AM – 9:55 AM | Location: Pershing Place East & West

SKILLS WORKSHOPS

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

In the evolving holistic corporate engagement arena, having broad knowledge in many areas equips the corporate relations officer to effectively manage the whole company relationship. Knowing the factors that distinguish gifts from contracts, and how factors balance against each other, is an important component of the corporate relations officer's toolkit. This knowledge can provide one framework that allows an officer to generate different types of revenue and build internal partnerships. Using an interactive case study approach, session attendees will become familiar with the factors and develop strategies to impactfully use this knowledge to enhance their work and achieve goals.

Speakers



Tim Hausman

Executive Director, Principal Gifts and Corporate Giving | University of Texas - El Paso



Charley Hasemann

Associate Vice President for Innovation and Economic Development | Michigan State University



Ashley Chan

Director of Corporate Engagement | Penn State University

One Global Company's Approach to Broadening Its Efforts to Create a Comprehensive University Engagement Model

9:00 AM – 9:55 AM | Location: Pershing Place North

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

This session will explore the strategic initiatives of Bayer Crop Science to enhance its collaboration with academic institutions. It will highlight the significance of university engagement, emphasizing mutual benefits such as talent acquisition, research collaboration, and innovation. Becker will share the company's background including its history, mission, and current university partnerships, showcasing successful collaborations. She will talk about strategic goals and outline the company's long-term vision and specific objectives for university engagement, aligning with its overall corporate strategy. The approach to broadening efforts at universities includes identifying new disciplines and regions for expansion, and developing comprehensive programs like internships, joint research projects, and scholarships. Implementation strategies focus on building strong relationships and leveraging technology for virtual engagement. Success metrics and continuous improvement are discussed through key performance indicators and feedback mechanisms. Becker will share case studies of successful collaborations, lessons learned, and a future outlook on the company's plans for university engagement.

Jennifer Becker, Director of Culture and Engagement, Bayer Crop Science, a 30+ year career employee of Bayer, legacy Monsanto, will share how the company is partnering with company leadership and corporate relations officers, faculty, and others at key university partners to enhance engagement in support of mutually beneficial goals that will position Bayer for success for decades to come.

Speakers



Jennifer Becker

Director, Culture & External Engagement ; Science Fellow | Bayer



Alison Doyle

Associate Director | Iowa State University Research Park



Deborah Thompson

Director of Research Partnerships College of Agriculture & Life Sciences | North Carolina State University

Moderator



Mark Boeck

Senior Executive Director, Corporate Engagement | Iowa State University Foundation

Break

9:55 AM – 10:10 AM | Location: Century Ballroom Foyer

Advanced Career Professionals: Managing Up - A Conversation with Senior Leader Peers

10:05 AM – 11:00 AM | Location: Pershing Place East & West

ADVANCED CAREER TRACK

Are you a senior leader who needs to tackle the traditional issues managing up direct reporting lines while also finding yourself trying to influence multiple lines of leadership? Join a panel of your peers to learn how they have observed or experienced "resisting" appropriately with success, helped leadership understand the many roles we play in corporate relations and the challenges we face to gain their advocacy, and advocated for partnerships to collaborate across campus most effectively. The panel will also share stories on how their staffs have successfully "managed up" to them. This session will include discussion to help you devise strategies and tactics for success at your own institution.

Moderator



Megan Greenawalt

Senior Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations, Health Sciences | University of Pittsburgh

Speakers



Angela Dudley

Sr AVP, Corporate Partnerships | Wichita State University: WSU Foundation & Alumni Engagement



Michael Harding

Associate Vice President, Partnerships | University of Central Florida



Stacey Willenborg

Executive Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations | The University of Oklahoma Foundation, Inc.

Three Perspectives on Organizational Change

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

Overview:

Based on feedback from corporate partners, many universities are restructuring their corporate relations function. In this interactive panel session, senior corporate relations officers from three universities (Georgia Tech, University of Georgia, and Vanderbilt) will discuss the rationale for reorganization and how they addressed cultural barriers and implemented a new engagement framework, including new organizational structures and job roles, database and performance metrics enhancements, and lessons learned from successes and setbacks.

Participants in this session will be invited to share their challenges in an interactive discussion format.

Georgia Institute of Technology:

Established in January 2022 from the merger of the campus Office of Corporate Relations (previously reporting to the VP for Development) and the Office of Industry Research (previously reporting to the Executive VP for Research), the new Office of Corporate Engagement (OCE) serves as the primary gateway for companies seeking connections with the campus, as well as for campus clients and stakeholders looking to connect with companies. The OCE focuses on expanding the breadth of existing partnerships, increasing transaction values, creating opportunities for under-engaged internal and external constituents, and proactively pursuing new partnerships. Through portfolio management and strategic initiatives, the OCE employs a "nine channels of engagement framework" aimed at creating mutual value and measuring seven types of revenue, which serve as evidence of truly holistic and stronger corporate partnerships.

University of Georgia:

The University of Georgia established the Office of Business Engagement in 2021 to provide a comprehensive, university-wide approach to managing corporate partnerships. Prior to its establishment, corporate philanthropy and experiential learning initiatives were managed by the Office of Corporate and Foundation Relations, while research-related industry collaborations were handled by the Office of Industry Engagement. The formation of the Office of Business Engagement brought these functions together, creating a unified, strategic entry point for corporate partners. As a central unit within Development and Alumni Relations, the Office of Business Engagement reports dually to the Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations and the Provost.

Vanderbilt University:

The Corporate Partnerships team at Vanderbilt University (CP@VU) was launched heading into FY24 and exists organizationally within the Provost's Office, reporting through the Vice Provost for Career Advancement & Engagement. The team is located both in Nashville (6 staff) and across each of the new regional Vanderbilt locations (1 staff each in Atlanta, Houston, New York City, and South Florida). The CP@VU office serves as the concierge for any corporate inquiries and opportunities—ensuring appropriate connection and follow through for optimal alignment with VU for mutual benefit. Team members also work consultatively to facilitate, expand, and advance organizational relationships with a portfolio of key accounts engaging across the university enterprise.

Key Takeaways:

- Strategic Decisions and Change Management: Understanding the rationale behind reorganization and strategies for overcoming cultural barriers.
- Stakeholder Engagement and Framework Implementation: Insights gained by gathering feedback and designing a new engagement framework that aligns with institutional goals.
- Organizational Design and Talent Management: Creating new structures for operations, relationship management, and strategic initiatives, along with developing new job roles and position descriptions.
- Performance Metrics and Technology Integration: Expanding metrics to measure success and transitioning to the new organizational structure.
- Successes and Challenges: incorporating after-action reviews of both high moments and failures, to inform and enhance future initiatives.

Panelist bios:

Allison Chesnutt holds the position of Senior Director of Business Engagement within the Office of Business Engagement at the University of Georgia. She has served the Office of Business Engagement since it was established in 2021. In her current capacity, Allison works to strategically align university resources with industry needs, aiming to enhance the positive impact of both sectors. Her areas of focus include philanthropy, research, and experiential learning. Allison has over a decade of experience in industry and has been with UGA for nearly seven years. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business and a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Georgia's School of Public and International Affairs.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/allisonchesnutt/>

Mark Nolan is the inaugural Associate Vice President of Georgia Tech's Office of Corporate Engagement (OCE), which he opened and operationally designed in January 2022. Prior to this role, Mark served as Associate Vice President of Business Engagement and Strategy at Carnegie Mellon University from 2016 to 2021. Before that, he spent 15 years in various industry-facing corporate relations and economic development positions at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Mark began his career within universities as a project manager at Johns Hopkins University in 1999, following many years in corporate and startup management roles. He has been an active member of NACRO since before the organization was called NACRO and has been a vocal advocate for the increasing importance of corporate relations officers in colleges and universities.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/marknolan/>

Dr. Scott Paja serves as Assistant Provost & Executive Director of Corporate Partnerships. Scott is a graduate of Central College in Pella, Iowa, where he earned his undergraduate degree. He then completed a master's and Ph.D. at Iowa State University. Before joining Vanderbilt, Scott held key roles in large public R1 higher education institutions, including most recently as Assistant Vice President of Partner Success for the Office of Innovation at the University of Cincinnati and as Assistant Dean of Experiential Learning

& Industry Relations for the College of Engineering at Oregon State University prior to that.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/scottpaja/>

Richard Potter is the principal consultant with RP Corporate Relations. His corporate relations experience spans four decades, four universities (University of Dubuque, Kansas State University, University of Georgia, and University of Missouri - Kansas City), and two national nonprofit organizations (Veterans of Foreign Wars Foundation and Nonprofit Leadership Alliance). As a consultant to universities, corporations, and nonprofits, he works with clients to make connections, develop partnerships, and focus on mutual benefits. Richard also serves as linchpin and lead guitarist for the Cedar Falls Rock & Roll Revue, a labor of love that supports grants for excellence in music and arts education. "It is quite literally more fun than mere mortals should be 'aloud!'"

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/richardmpotter/>

55-minute session guideline:

- Introductions 5-10 minutes
- Panel discussion 30 minutes
- Interactive Q&A 15-20 minutes

Speakers



Mark Nolan

Associate President, Office of Corporate Engagement | Georgia Institute of Technology



Allison Chesnutt

Senior Director of Business Engagement | University of Georgia



Scott Paja

Assistant Provost & Executive Director of Corporate Partnerships | Vanderbilt University

Moderator



Richard Potter

Principal Consultant | RP Corporate Relations

Wheels Meet the Road: How the Accelerator Model Catalyzed Collaboration between Bridgestone, Nissan, and Vanderbilt

10:05 AM – 11:00 AM | Location: Pershing Place North

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Accelerator Model is a tactical tool deployed by Vanderbilt University to help propel university-industry partnerships to new destinations. "Rubber Meets the Road" will provide a case study of how Vanderbilt used this collaborative, inter-organizational event to build trust and credibility between the institution and the companies, while also producing a roadmap for ongoing collaboration. This session will explore the key elements that made each Accelerator a success, lessons learned along the way, and practical strategies for replicating this model at other institutions. The session will include remarks and perspectives from both Bridgestone and Nissan representatives.

Speaker



Matthew Seaton

Director of Corporate Partnerships | Vanderbilt University

Co-speaker



Camilla Stringfellow

Director of Corporate Partnerships | Vanderbilt University

Revamping Your CRM's Data Structure to Enable Data Driven Corporate Engagement

10:05 AM – 11:00 AM | Location: Shawnee Mission

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

Discover how the University of Wyoming Foundation transformed its data related to corporate relationships by addressing the data structure of their CRM data collection. Learn about innovative approaches to integrate metrics like giving, research investments, and career services into a CRM, and how a nine-month account clean-up improved reporting and efficiency. Gain actionable insights into managing data from across campus, enabling comprehensive analyses to increase the effectiveness of managing corporate partnerships.

Speaker



Angela Ver Ploeg

Sr. Director of Corporate Engagement | University of Wyoming Office of Industry and Strategic Partnerships

Co-speaker



Jessica Stugart

Data Integrity Manager | University of Wyoming Foundation

Thursday Morning Plenary: Partnership Perspective from Both Sides

This moderated panel will feature two industry leaders and one university leader sharing their insights, experiences, and opinions on the value of industry-academia partnerships. Conversation will focus on the importance of aligning multiple stakeholders, demonstrating ROI, the importance of follow-up, and more.

Speakers



Whitney Riley

Associate Vice President, Corporate and Foundation Development | Kansas State University Foundation



David Disberger

President & CEO | Great Plains Manufacturing, Inc.



Jason Wollum

Chief Growth Officer | Henderson Engineers



Eric Holderness

Vice President of Development | Kansas State University Foundation

Lunch and Informal Networking

12:15 PM – 1:30 PM | Location: Century Ballroom

Cost Share and Partnerships: Corporate Engagement's Hidden Power in Big Grants

1:40 PM – 2:35 PM | Location: Liberty

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

SKILLS WORKSHOPS

As multi-million-dollar grants from agencies like DOE, DOD, NSF, and DOC increasingly require industry cost share contributions, universities must navigate complexities with their industry partners. This session dives into how cost share can boost—or challenge—your university's partnerships. We'll cover how to define cost share, its impact on collaborations, and how Corporate Engagement can turn it into a win-win. Learn how to negotiate, structure agreements, and align goals with corporate partners, all while leveraging cost share to unlock philanthropic and research funding.

Has your institution recently applied for multi-million-dollar grant initiatives through agencies like the Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Defense (DOD), National Science Foundation (NSF), or Department of Commerce (DOC)? If so, you've likely encountered a growing trend: more grant applications now require industry cost share contributions. While these partnerships present incredible opportunities, they also come with challenges that can significantly impact both grant success and university-corporate relationships. This presentation dives into the critical, yet often misunderstood, role of cost share in large-scale grants and highlights how Corporate Engagement offices can be instrumental in navigating this complex landscape. Whether you're new to Corporate Engagement or a seasoned professional, this presentation equips you with the knowledge and tools to turn cost share from a challenge into a strategic advantage. Don't let cost share requirements derail your grant ambitions—discover how to make them work for you and your partners! Attendees will gain insights into: Defining Cost Share and Its Implications: A clear overview of what cost share entails, the financial and organizational responsibilities it creates, and the stakes it raises for both the university and corporate partners. Positive and Negative Impacts on Partnerships: Learn how cost share requirements can strengthen collaborations by aligning goals and fostering deeper corporate relationships—or create tension and misalignment if poorly managed. Corporate Engagement's Role: Explore how Corporate Engagement professionals can identify potential partners, negotiate cost share commitments, and communicate the mutual benefits of collaboration effectively. Strategies for Success: Best practices for structuring cost share agreements, ensuring compliance with grant requirements, and maintaining long-term trust with partners. Lessons Learned from Real-World Examples: Hear about successful case studies where Corporate Engagement's involvement in cost share navigation has resulted in more research and philanthropic dollars into the university.

Speakers



Ashley Chan

Director of Corporate Engagement | Penn State University



James Reecy

Associate Vice President for Research | Iowa State University

Moderator



Michelle Arbogast

Tennessee Technological University

IQ, EQ, and "VQ"! How Vanderbilt Leveraged an Enterprise-wide CRM Strategy to Navigate Internal Barriers

1:40 PM – 2:35 PM | Location: Shawnee Mission

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

SKILLS WORKSHOPS

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Join this session with Vanderbilt University's Assistant Vice-Provost & Executive Director, Scott Paja and Regional Director, Yolanda Norman as they break down the institutions bold approach to embracing a university-wide CRM strategy that has redefined collaboration, communication, and impact! Through an intentional shift from siloed systems to an integrated Salesforce-powered platform—VandyQuest—driven by a visionary new division and a dynamic corporate partnerships team, Vanderbilt is streamlining operations, amplifying

efficiency, and unlocking data in ways that tell a richer, more actionable story. Join us to explore how innovation meets strategy to elevate outcomes at scale.

Co-speakers



Scott Paja

Assistant Provost & Executive Director of Corporate Partnerships | Vanderbilt University



Yolanda Norman, Ed.D.

Regional Director of Corporate Partnerships - Houston, TX | Vanderbilt University

Sponsored Session: Finding Industry Partners: Free and Low-Cost Tools for University Revenue Generation

1:40 PM – 2:35 PM | Location: Pershing Place East & West

In today's challenging federal funding landscape, universities must develop alternative revenue streams to remain sustainable. This presentation will showcase a variety of completely free and low-cost software tools and strategic approaches that academic institutions can immediately implement to identify and connect with ideal industry partners. Discover how to leverage these accessible resources to build mutually beneficial collaborations that generate new revenue while requiring minimal upfront investment from your department or institution.

Speaker



Karim Bouayad-Gervais

President | Pillar Science

Connection to Place: How Rural Universities Support Their Regions

1:40 PM – 2:35 PM | Location: Pershing Place North

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Rural universities have an outsized impact in the regions in which they operate and serve. Aside from economic impact, these institutions also hold a strategic purpose in supporting rural ecosystems. Shared objectives between regional employers, economic development, and state/local government agencies present opportunities to lead initiatives that unlock funding that serves the region, including talent development, community development, place-making, and cultural/societal priorities. As an update to the presentation at the 2023 Conference, this presentation will share examples of university-led initiatives that are fueling university, community, and business partnerships for rural regions.

Speaker



David Nyberg

Executive Director, Business Engagement and Economic Development | Northern Michigan University

Break

2:35 PM – 2:45 PM | Location: Century Ballroom Foyer

Simplifying Corporate Sponsorships Without a CPA: A Model to Build Tools that Make Corporate Sponsorships Fun!

2:45 PM – 3:40 PM | Location: Liberty

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Does the thought of corporate sponsorships make your head spin? In this session, we'll tackle the seemingly overwhelming world of corporate sponsorships and show you how to make it accessible—even for the average non-CPA.

Corporate sponsorships are a powerful way to build relationships, secure funding, and drive impact, but the tax implications and legal jargon often scare campus partners and seasoned corporate relations professionals away. This session is here to change that. Through a step-by-step guide, you'll learn about a simple, user-friendly process developed at the University of Wyoming that takes the mystery (and the fear) out of corporate sponsorships. **No accounting degree required!**

Speaker



Angela Ver Ploeg

Sr. Director of Corporate Engagement | University of Wyoming Office of Industry and Strategic Partnerships

From Data to Action: Using Industry Profiles to Assess Campus Vitals and Empower Task Force Solutions

2:45 PM – 3:40 PM | Location: Shawnee Mission

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

To assess industry engagement on our campus, we embarked on an initiative to form a data lake that pulled from siloed campus CRMs and human gatekeepers. We used the analogy of a holistic health checkup to assess a company's "campus vitals." A **Power BI tool** was created to synthesize, analyze, and display our results as **industry profiles**. To drive action, a **task force** of interdisciplinary campus stakeholders was assembled to evaluate the findings and strategize on how to enhance campus-industry relationships. In this session, we will share our data collection process, lessons learned, and next steps for using industry profiles as "campus vitals" to maximize industry engagement potential.

Speaker



Catherine Beasley

Director for Industry and Community Engagement | University of Arkansas

Co-speaker



Donna Graham

Director for Central Arkansas Industry and Community Engagement | University of Arkansas

Individualized Engagement for Research and Business Leaders in Industry

2:45 PM – 3:40 PM | Location: Pershing Place North

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology industry fellows program provides customized and sustained engagement opportunities for business and research leaders from industry. Participants share their knowledge and experience through professional development training for students and postdoctoral researchers, and they regularly engage with IGB researchers to share insights into gaps in industry research and technology development that may be addressed through research collaboration.

Attendees will learn about best-practices in developing customized engagement programs for business and research leaders in select industries, leveraging these programs to identify specific strengths of corporate partners to pursue funding opportunities and research collaborations, and advancing economic development through building a network of industry partners through cultivation of relationships with specific business and research leaders at key companies.

Speaker



Tracy Parish

Director of External Relations and Strategic Partnerships | University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Co-speaker



Jesse Dill

Senior Director of Business Development | Ginkgo Bioworks, Inc.

How Universities Can Promote and Strengthen a Region's Growing Economy

2:45 PM – 3:40 PM | Location: Pershing Place East & West

CORPORATE RELATIONS OPERATIONS

UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

This session explores the unique role universities play in fostering regional economic growth. Attendees will gain insights into how economic development in a university context differs, including key metrics for success. The session highlights strategies for supporting regional economic pipelines and building partnerships with municipalities, economic development offices, and academic institutions. The session will also provide examples of university-driven initiatives that demonstrate their impact as regional economic drivers. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies and best practices for leveraging university resources to strengthen economic development in their regions.

Speaker



Sean Edmonds

Economic Development Manager | ASU Economic Development

Closing Remarks

3:45 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Century Ballroom