



## Senior Director of Development, Powers College of Business

### Leadership Profile

Fall 2026



## Executive Summary

Clemson University invites nominations and applications for the **Senior Director of Development and Team Lead position for the Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business**. Reporting to the Executive Director of Development, the Senior Director will serve as the College's lead advancement officer, providing strategic leadership for its philanthropic priorities and managing a team of development and support professionals.

This is a compelling opportunity to join one of the nation's leading public research universities during a period of significant institutional and philanthropic momentum. Clemson publicly launched *Fiercely Forward: A Campaign for Clemson* in 2025 with a goal of \$1.889 billion—the most ambitious campaign in the University's history. The campaign advances the priorities of Clemson Elevate, the University's strategic plan, including student success, faculty excellence, research and innovation, facilities, and long-term endowment growth.

The Powers College of Business is among Clemson's fastest growing and most strategically important academic units. Enrollment has increased by more than 170 percent over the past decade, and the College continues to expand its national reputation, academic programs, corporate partnerships, and impact at the intersection of business, technology, analytics, and innovation. As Clemson's first named college, it has also benefited from extraordinary philanthropic investment, including the transformational \$60 million gift from Wilbur O. and Ann Powers.

Working closely with Dean Wendy York, College leaders, and colleagues throughout the Advancement Division, the Senior Director will develop and execute comprehensive fundraising strategies, grow the College's pipeline of major and principal gift prospects, and connect donors with opportunities to shape the future of business education. The Senior Director will manage a portfolio of up to 150 prospects and donors, conduct approximately 160–180 substantive visits annually, and work toward an annual fundraising goal of at least \$5 million.

The successful candidate will be an accomplished, collaborative advancement professional who can translate academic priorities into compelling philanthropic opportunities. This individual will be an effective relationship builder, strategist, fundraiser, and team leader, energized by Clemson's highly engaged alumni community, ambitious campaign, and culture of institutional pride.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see the Procedure for Candidacy.

## Position Summary

The Senior Director of Development serves as the lead advancement officer for the Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business, providing strategic leadership for all philanthropic activities in support of the College's mission and priorities. Reporting to the Executive Director of Development, the Senior Director partners closely with College leadership to develop and execute comprehensive fundraising strategies, strengthen donor engagement, and secure significant philanthropic support.

As the College's primary advancement liaison, the Senior Director fosters strong collaboration among academic and advancement leaders while advancing a culture of philanthropy across the institution. This individual will build and manage relationships with alumni, donors, and philanthropic partners; identify opportunities for philanthropic investment; and align fundraising efforts with the College's strategic goals and priorities.

## Reporting Relationship

The Senior Director of Development will report to the Executive Director of Development and serve as the lead advancement partner to the Dean of the Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business. The Senior Director will supervise a team of development officers and internal support professionals and participate in the University Development's Team Lead collective.

## Responsibilities

### Fundraising

- Manages a dynamic portfolio of no more than 150 prospects and donors who have the capacity to make a philanthropic major gift.
- Qualifies, cultivates, solicits, and stewards gifts from the College and unit donors, alumni, and friends through 160–180 visits annually.
- Coordinates cultivation, stewardship, and donor-engagement opportunities and events for assigned donors and the Powers College of Business.
- Raises a minimum of \$5 million annually, with goals for subsequent years determined in conjunction with the Executive Director.

### College Leadership and Engagement

- Establishes strong partnerships with the Dean and strategic leaders within the College.
- Leads the unit's efforts for the current capital campaign by collaborating with the College and supporting unit and program leadership to develop philanthropic strategies that advance the campaign's key priorities and the College's mission.
- Engages actively with the Dean and College and unit leaders to cultivate and steward top donors and prospects.

- Leads efforts to grow the College's philanthropic pipeline and revenue.
- Serves as the primary liaison and mission-critical link between the Advancement Division and the College and its supporting units and programs.

### Strategic Collaboration and Partnerships

- Utilizes relationships with the Dean and other key leaders to advance the philanthropic strategies and priorities of the College and exceed annual fundraising goals.
- Facilitates collaboration with team members across the Advancement Division who are essential to the College's fundraising efforts.
- Participates as a member of the University Development's Team Lead collective.

### Team Leadership

- Directly supervises a team of development officers and internal support team members.
- Coaches and mentors team members to achieve their fundraising and performance goals and objectives.
- Leads comprehensive annual planning and performance-review procedures with team members.
- Participates in required manager and supervisor activities, trainings, and other activities necessary to oversee direct reports successfully.

## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next Senior Director of Development will have the opportunity to advance the Powers College of Business during a period of significant momentum, helping to shape its philanthropic future while strengthening Clemson's culture of engagement and impact.

### Partner with the Dean to Advance the College's Ambitious Vision

The Senior Director will build a close, trusted partnership with Dean Wendy York and other College leaders, developing a deep understanding of the Powers College of Business's academic programs, aspirations, and philanthropic priorities. The Senior Director will help translate the College's vision into compelling investment opportunities and provide strategic counsel on donor engagement, campaign planning, and positioning emerging priorities.

### Capitalize on a Historic Moment of Philanthropic Opportunity

Clemson's *Fiercely Forward* campaign provides an exceptional platform for advancing the College's priorities. The Senior Director will lead the development and execution of the College's campaign strategy, building upon Clemson's strong fundraising performance, loyal alumni community, and growing principal-gift activity. Opportunities for support include student access and success, faculty excellence, experiential learning, entrepreneurship, analytics, technology, innovative academic programs, corporate engagement, and endowment growth.

### Grow the College's Major-Gift Pipeline and Fundraising Results

The Senior Director will develop a disciplined strategy to identify, qualify, cultivate, solicit, and steward alumni, donors, and prospective philanthropic partners. Managing a portfolio of up to 150 prospects and donors, the Senior Director will conduct approximately 160–180 visits annually and work toward an annual fundraising goal of at least \$5 million. Success will require both strong personal fundraising performance and the ability to build a sustainable pipeline that supports the College's long-term ambitions.

### Strengthen Collaboration Across the College and Advancement Division

Serving as the primary liaison between the Powers College of Business and the Advancement Division, the Senior Director will foster coordination among academic leaders, central development colleagues, alumni engagement professionals, donor-relations teams, and other institutional partners. As a member of the University Development Team's Unit Lead collective, the Senior Director will help ensure that the College benefits from the full resources and expertise of Clemson's advancement enterprise.

### Lead, Develop, and Inspire a High-Performing Team

The Senior Director will provide clear direction, coaching, and accountability to a team of development officers and support professionals. This individual will set shared goals, strengthen portfolio and pipeline management, conduct meaningful annual planning and performance reviews, and create an environment where team members are supported in achieving ambitious individual and collective results.



## Candidate Qualifications

### Education/Certification

Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree or other advanced degree preferred.

### Experience and Qualifications

Candidates must possess at least five years of related experience in fundraising, development, sales, alumni engagement, or a closely related field.

Higher-education or complex nonprofit fundraising experience is preferred, along with a demonstrated ability to cultivate, solicit, and close six- and seven-figure gifts.

### Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

- **Accomplished Fundraiser:** The successful candidate will have a demonstrated record of developing donor relationships and securing significant philanthropic commitments. This individual will understand the full cycle of major-gift fundraising and bring the discipline, persistence, and judgment necessary to manage a substantial portfolio and achieve ambitious fundraising goals.
- **Strategic Partner and Advisor:** The Senior Director will develop trusted relationships with the Dean, academic leaders, and Advancement colleagues. The successful candidate will listen carefully, understand complex institutional priorities, and translate academic ideas and aspirations into clear, compelling philanthropic opportunities.
- **Collaborative Institutional Leader:** The Senior Director will recognize that success depends upon collaboration across organizational boundaries. This individual will communicate openly, share information, coordinate effectively with central and unit-based colleagues, and contribute actively to Clemson's broader advancement goals.
- **Effective Team Leader and Coach:** The successful candidate will be able to lead, motivate, and develop advancement professionals with differing levels of experience. The Senior Director will establish clear expectations, provide constructive feedback, recognize strong performance, and foster a team culture characterized by accountability, collaboration, and shared success.
- **Compelling Communicator and Relationship Builder:** The Senior Director will communicate effectively with a broad range of internal and external audiences, including academic leaders, alumni, donors, volunteers, corporate executives, and Advancement colleagues. This individual will be an attentive listener and persuasive advocate who can convey the College's priorities with authenticity and enthusiasm.
- **Entrepreneurial and Opportunity-Oriented:** The successful candidate will bring curiosity, creativity, and initiative to identifying new prospects, partnerships, and sources of philanthropic support. An appreciation for business education—and for the ways technology, analytics, entrepreneurship, and innovation are transforming the field—will be particularly valuable.
- **Sound Judgment and Personal Integrity:** The Senior Director will demonstrate discretion, emotional intelligence, diplomacy, resilience, and impeccable integrity. This individual will be comfortable operating within a complex university environment and balancing institutional priorities, donor interests, and long-term relationships.

## About Clemson University

Clemson University is one of the nation's premier public land-grant research universities and a Carnegie R1 institution, serving more than 29,000 students across undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. Combining academic excellence, a highly engaged alumni community, and a culture of innovation, Clemson advances education, research, and economic development throughout South Carolina and beyond.

Located in Upstate South Carolina along the shores of Lake Hartwell and near the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Clemson offers a distinctive environment that blends the resources and opportunities of a leading public research university with the character of a vibrant college town. The University is widely recognized for excellence across engineering, business, agriculture, health sciences, computing, and the sciences, while fostering a collaborative culture that supports student success, research, and public impact.

As one of the nation's most active research institutions, Clemson is advancing groundbreaking work in areas including advanced manufacturing, sustainability, cybersecurity, health, energy, and technology innovation. Through partnerships with industry, government, and communities, faculty and researchers are addressing complex societal challenges while strengthening workforce development and economic growth across the region and beyond.

Clemson consistently ranks among the country's leading public universities and is widely regarded as South Carolina's premier public institution. Known for strong student outcomes, exceptional alumni engagement, and a national reputation, Clemson has cultivated one of the nation's most loyal and active alumni networks. This culture of lifelong connection powerfully drives engagement, volunteerism, and philanthropy.

The University's strategic plan, [Clemson Elevate](#), outlines an ambitious vision focused on student success, research excellence, faculty distinction, innovation, and societal impact. Philanthropy plays a central role in advancing these priorities, helping Clemson expand access, attract world-class talent, support transformative research, and strengthen its position among the nation's preeminent public universities.

## University Leadership

### Benjamin C. Ayers, President



Benjamin C. Ayers became president of Clemson University on August 1, 2026. A nationally respected academic leader, administrator, and educator, he brings three decades of higher-education experience and a record of advancing academic excellence, research, student opportunity, and philanthropic support.

Before joining Clemson, Ayers served as senior vice president for academic affairs and provost at the University of Georgia, where he was the institution's chief academic officer. He oversaw UGA's 20 schools and colleges as well as its academic, research, public-service, and outreach enterprises.

Previously, Ayers served for 11 years as dean of UGA's Terry College of Business. During his tenure, the College expanded its academic programs and enrollment, strengthened student-success initiatives, and raised more than \$300 million for scholarships, faculty excellence, academic programs, and new facilities. His business-school leadership and fundraising experience are particularly relevant as Clemson advances the ambitions of the Powers College of Business and the *Fiercely Forward* campaign.

Ayers is a nationally recognized scholar in taxation and financial accounting and a former president of the American Taxation Association. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Alabama and a doctorate in accounting from the University of Texas at Austin.

## Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business

The Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business is among Clemson University's fastest-growing and most dynamic academic enterprises. Named in 2020 following a transformative \$60 million gift from philanthropists and South Carolina business leaders Wilbur O. ("Billy") and Ann Powers, the College is a powerful example of Clemson's aspirations and momentum. As Clemson's first named college, it drives talent development, economic impact, innovation, and industry engagement while playing an increasingly prominent role in advancing the University's national reputation and strategic priorities.



Over the past decade, enrollment has increased by more than 170 percent, reflecting the College's remarkable growth trajectory and expanding appeal. Students from more than 40 states and numerous countries are drawn to a learning environment that combines academic excellence with experiential education, career preparation, and meaningful industry engagement.

The College is distinguished by its commitment to preparing graduates for success in an increasingly complex and technology-driven economy. Its programs span traditional business disciplines while embracing emerging fields such as analytics, entrepreneurship, financial technology, supply chain management, and business intelligence. Through robust corporate partnerships, interdisciplinary collaboration, and hands-on learning opportunities, students gain practical experience and develop the leadership skills needed to address real-world challenges.

A hallmark of the Powers College experience is its portfolio of nationally recognized signature programs, which provide students with immersive opportunities to develop expertise in leadership, sales, branding, entrepreneurship, and global engagement. Programs such as the Dean's Global Leadership Program, Leadership Signature Program, Erwin Center for Brand Communications, and Garrison Sales Innovation Program offer students distinctive pathways to build professional skills, expand their networks, and gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The Sales Education Foundation recognizes the College's professional sales program as a Top University for Professional Sales Education, and Clemson's Online MBA is ranked No. 1 in South Carolina.

Strategically positioned within a nationally recognized research university, the Powers College leverages Clemson's strengths in engineering, computing, analytics, advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, and innovation to create unique opportunities at the intersection of business and technology. Few business schools are as well-positioned to prepare leaders to navigate increasingly technology-enabled industries and organizations.

The College's presence in both Clemson and Greenville further strengthens its connection to industry and economic development. Through Greenville ONE, a state-of-the-art facility located in one of the Southeast's fastest-growing business hubs, the College maintains close relationships with employers, entrepreneurs, and corporate leaders, creating meaningful opportunities for talent development, executive education, innovation, and corporate engagement.

The College's momentum presents significant opportunities for philanthropic investment. Support from alumni, corporate partners, foundations, and friends can accelerate student success, expand experiential learning opportunities, strengthen faculty excellence, advance innovation, and enhance the College's national visibility and impact.

## Mission

The Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business graduates servant leaders equipped with 21st-century skills to thrive in a dynamic global economy.

## Vision

The Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business will leverage the strengths of its Foundational Disciplines (academic departments) to create Signature Programs. These business-critical competencies will be the College and contribute to Clemson University's rise in educational relevance nationally.

## College Leadership



### Wendy York, Dean

Wendy York became dean of the Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business in July 2018. She previously served as associate dean at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business, where she reorganized multiple units to achieve greater strategic alignment. The resulting structure strengthened support for faculty research, innovative curricula, and experiential-learning opportunities for faculty, students, and alumni.

York also served as managing director of Programs for Executive Education at Stanford, leading programs for executives and corporations while extending the reach of faculty research and teaching.

Before entering higher education, York spent more than 20 years in for-profit and nonprofit organizations. She worked for more than five years as a venture capitalist, managing a private portfolio with a market capitalization of \$100 million, and started or led four early-stage technology and internet companies. These included a database-marketing company that she founded and later sold to a national advertising agency.

York earned an undergraduate degree in international relations with honors from Stanford University and an MBA with an emphasis in strategy and operations from Harvard Business School. Her experience in higher education, entrepreneurship, technology, and organizational transformation informs the College's continued growth and evolution.

## Philanthropic Momentum at the Powers College of Business

The Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business has benefited from extraordinary philanthropic support, most notably the transformational \$60 million gift from Wilbur O. and Ann Powers, which was the largest gift in Clemson University's history at the time. The investment established the Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business, strengthened scholarship support, expanded faculty excellence initiatives, enhanced signature academic programs, and accelerated the College's rise as a nationally recognized destination for business education.

Today, the College is well-positioned to capitalize on the momentum of the *Fiercely Forward* campaign. Continued investments in experiential learning, entrepreneurship, analytics, technology, faculty excellence, student success, and corporate engagement create meaningful opportunities for alumni, corporate partners, and donors to help shape the future of business education at Clemson.

## Clemson University Advancement

Clemson University's Advancement Division fosters meaningful engagement and philanthropic investment in support of the University's mission and strategic priorities. Guided by its "Clemson Forever" philosophy, the division cultivates lifelong relationships with alumni, parents, corporations, foundations, and friends while advancing student success, faculty excellence, research, innovation, and institutional growth.

Through a highly collaborative model, advancement professionals partner closely with colleges, schools, and academic leaders to develop fundraising strategies, expand major and principal gift pipelines, and secure philanthropic support for transformational priorities.

A hallmark of Clemson's advancement enterprise is its deeply engaged and loyal alumni community, reflected in strong volunteer leadership, sustained donor engagement, and growing philanthropic support across the University.

Clemson University's Advancement Division fosters meaningful engagement and philanthropic investment in support of the University's mission, strategic priorities, and future aspirations. Guided by its "Clemson Forever" philosophy, the division cultivates lifelong relationships with alumni, parents, corporations, foundations, and friends while advancing student success, faculty excellence, research, innovation, and institutional growth.

### Advancement by the Numbers

- \$1.889 billion campaign goal
- \$1.297 billion secured during the campaign's leadership phase
- 102,000+ donors engaged in *Fiercely Forward*
- 724,000+ gifts contributed to the campaign
- \$202 million raised in FY2026
- Six consecutive years exceeding \$200 million in annual fundraising
- 38,120 donors supported Clemson in FY2026
- \$60 million transformational gift to the Powers College of Business
- One of the nation's strongest alumni networks, helping fuel sustained philanthropic growth

### Fiercely Forward: A Campaign for Clemson



In 2025, Clemson publicly launched *Fiercely Forward: A Campaign for Clemson*, the largest fundraising initiative in University history. With a goal of \$1.889 billion, the campaign supports scholarships, faculty excellence, research and innovation, student success, facilities, and endowment growth while serving as the philanthropic engine behind Clemson Elevate, the University's strategic vision for expanding its impact and national prominence.

The campaign entered its public phase with extraordinary momentum, securing more than \$1.29 billion in commitments during the leadership phase and engaging more than 102,000 donors. Clemson has also surpassed \$200 million in annual fundraising for six consecutive years, reflecting the strength of its donor community and sustained confidence in the University's future.

### Advancement Leadership

The Advancement Division is led by Senior Vice President for Advancement Brian O'Rourke and Senior Associate Vice President for Development Missy Ryan Penland. Together with the University's development leadership team, they have helped foster a culture rooted in collaboration, donor engagement, and philanthropic impact while positioning Clemson among the nation's most successful public university advancement enterprises.

**Brian O'Rourke, Senior Vice President for Advancement**

Brian O'Rourke first came to Clemson as an undergraduate in the late 1970s. He earned a bachelor's degree in administrative management in 1983 and a master's degree in personnel services in 1985. As a student, he served as a basketball manager and was inducted into Tiger Brotherhood, Alpha Tau Omega, and Blue Key Honor Society.

After graduation, O'Rourke spent five years as director of field activities for the Clemson Alumni Association. He subsequently served as vice president of development for St. Francis Health System in Greenville and as executive director of its foundation. Before returning to Clemson, he was a senior consultant with Corporate Development, a Charleston-based fundraising consulting firm.

O'Rourke now leads Clemson's Advancement Division and the University's multibillion-dollar Fiercely Forward campaign. His advancement experience and deep institutional connection have helped foster a fundraising culture grounded in relationships, loyalty, collaboration, and impact.

**Missy Ryan Penland, CFRE, MPA, Senior Associate Vice President for Development**

Missy Ryan Penland is a nationally recognized advancement professional with more than 20 years of experience serving universities, colleges, hospitals, independent schools, and social-service organizations. Since joining Clemson in 2007, she has personally raised more than \$60 million and now leads the University Development Team.

Under Penland's leadership, Clemson's development and donor-relations professionals play an integral role in achieving the University's annual fundraising goals and advancing its broader institutional mission. She also works to strengthen partnerships among advancement professionals, academic leaders, colleges, schools, and units across Clemson.

Penland was named one of six national "Fundraising Stars" by *Fundraising Success Magazine* in 2010 and was recognized as the Association of Fundraising Professionals' Fundraising Executive of the Year for Upstate South Carolina. More recently, she was named one of the Top 50 Women Leaders in Education for 2023 and serves as chair of the AFP Foundation Board.

**Margaret Owns, Executive Director of Development**

Margaret Owens serves as Executive Director of Development for Colleges and Units at Clemson University, where she provides fundraising strategy, leadership, and oversight for 13 colleges and units. She manages a dynamic team of 20 fundraisers, unit leads, team leads, and support staff focused on advancing Clemson's academic mission through philanthropy and meaningful donor engagement. Margaret takes great pride in the professional development of her team and in creating an environment that supports growth, collaboration, and fundraising excellence.

A Clemson alumna, Margaret earned a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science in 1991 and a Master of Agriculture in 1992. Her career began in agricultural leadership, serving as executive director of the South Carolina Soybean Board and South Carolina Corn and Soybean Association, followed by leadership of the South Carolina Cattlemen's Association and South Carolina Beef Board.

Margaret later served for five years as executive director of an emergency crisis center in North Myrtle Beach. That experience deepened her understanding of philanthropy's power to transform lives and reinforced her belief in the role of quality education in helping individuals and families rise from crisis.

In 2012, Margaret returned to Clemson to join the University Development Team as Senior Director of Development for the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences and Public Service for Agriculture. Since then, she has built a career centered on strategic fundraising, team leadership, donor relationships, and securing philanthropic support for Clemson's colleges and academic priorities.

## Upstate South Carolina



### Living in Clemson and Upstate South Carolina

Located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and along the shores of Lake Hartwell, Clemson offers an outstanding quality of life defined by natural beauty, a strong sense of community, and access to the Southeast's cultural and economic opportunities. Home to Clemson University, the city is renowned for its close town-and-gown connection, creating a welcoming and vibrant environment for residents and visitors alike.

Outdoor recreation is a hallmark of the region. From boating and fishing on Lake Hartwell to hiking and cycling in the nearby mountains, residents enjoy year-round opportunities to explore some of the Southeast's most scenic landscapes.

Clemson is conveniently located within Upstate South Carolina, one of the nation's fastest-growing regions. Greenville, just 45 minutes away, offers a dynamic downtown, thriving arts and culinary scene, and a growing business community, while Anderson provides additional residential and recreational opportunities. Situated between Atlanta and Charlotte and served by Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport, the region combines the advantages of a close-knit university community with convenient access to major metropolitan centers.

The result is a distinctive living environment that offers the character of a college town, the amenities of a growing region, and the exceptional lifestyle that has made Upstate South Carolina one of the Southeast's most desirable places to call home.

### Greenville, South Carolina

About 45 minutes from Clemson University, Greenville is the economic and cultural center of Upstate South Carolina and one of the Southeast's most dynamic, fastest-growing communities. Home to more than 75,000 residents and a thriving business environment, Greenville offers an appealing blend of urban amenities, strong schools, abundant outdoor recreation, and a nationally recognized downtown district.

Centered around the scenic Reedy River and Falls Park on the Reedy, downtown Greenville features award-winning restaurants, arts and cultural attractions, shopping, entertainment, and a vibrant calendar of community events. Greenville's location between Atlanta and Charlotte, combined with convenient access to Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport, makes it an attractive option for professionals seeking a high quality of life with easy regional and national connectivity.

Many Clemson faculty and staff choose to reside in Greenville, enjoying the city's energy and amenities while maintaining convenient access to campus and the surrounding Upstate region.

## Procedure for Candidacy



All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Clemson University in this search, which will remain open until an appointment is made.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Ashley Buderus, Mercedes Chacón Vance, and Jevon Walton via the office of Jevon Walton at [jwalton@wittkieffer.com](mailto:jwalton@wittkieffer.com).

*Clemson prohibits discrimination, including harassment, of any applicant, employee, student, guest or visitor because of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy (including childbirth, or related medical condition), national origin, age (40+), disability, protected veteran's status, genetic information, or any other personal characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.*