



Director OR Senior Director of Donor Experiences and Special Events

**Title and compensation commensurate with experience*

About the Virginia Athletics Foundation (VAF) and Virginia Athletics:

The Virginia Athletics Foundation (VAF), through its fundraising efforts to be an annual \$100 Million private 501(c)(3), Athletics fundraising organization, strives to support a preeminent intercollegiate athletics program at the University of Virginia by providing more than 750 student-athletes across 27 sports programs the opportunity to achieve academic and athletic excellence. More than 11,000 individuals commit annually to the Virginia Athletics Foundation (VAF) and their financial investments position our teams to successfully compete both at the national and conference levels.

As a member of the VAF, you play a vital role in supporting student-athletes as they strive for excellence in competition, the classroom, and beyond. Membership also provides access to the benefits and opportunities that come with being part of this important community of supporters.

The Virginia Athletics Foundation is sustained through annual giving, planned gifts, and major philanthropic investments. Each form of support is essential to advancing the mission and long-term success of Virginia Athletics.

Virginia Athletics Foundation (VAF) Mission Statement:

The Virginia Athletics Foundation exists to strengthen Virginia Athletics by cultivating meaningful relationships and philanthropic support that empower student-athletes to pursue excellence in competition, the classroom, and life.

JOB SUMMARY

Reporting to the Chief of Staff, the Director/Senior Director of Donor Experiences & Special Events provides strategic and creative leadership for the development, planning, and in-person execution of donor experiences, special events, and premium hospitality for the Virginia Athletics Foundation.

This position is responsible for bringing the VAF donor experience to life through memorable events, personalized engagement opportunities, premium hospitality, and special experiences that strengthen donors' connections to Virginia Athletics.

The Director/Senior Director serves as VAF's lead for event strategy, experience design, event production, premium hospitality, and on-site execution. The position works closely with VAF leadership, development officers, Virginia Athletics, coaches, student-athletes, University partners, and external vendors to create experiences that recognize philanthropy, advance fundraising priorities, and distinguish the VAF donor experience. This is a highly visible and primarily in-person position that requires significant interaction with donors and guests and regular evening and weekend responsibilities based on the Virginia Athletics and VAF event calendars.



JOB DUTIES

Leadership & Team Management

- Lead, mentor, and supervise the Donor Experience team, providing strategic direction, professional development, performance management, and daily oversight.
- The Director/Senior Director of Donor Experiences & Special Events works in close partnership with the Senior Director of Donor Experience Operations, with clearly defined areas of responsibility.
- Establish annual goals, priorities, and operational standards for the Donor Experience team.
- Foster a collaborative, service-oriented culture focused on delivering exceptional donor experiences.
- Oversee staffing plans for events, premium hospitality spaces, volunteers, and game-day personnel.
- Provide leadership to Donor Experience staff whose primary responsibilities involve event execution, hospitality, and donor-facing activities.
- Establish event roles and responsibilities for staff, interns, volunteers, and other participants.
- Lead pre-event staff meetings and briefings.
- Train team members on event execution, hospitality standards, donor interaction, and problem solving.
- Provide leadership and direction during events and game days.
- Foster a collaborative, service-oriented culture focused on creating exceptional experiences.

Donor Experience Strategy

- Develop and lead VAF's strategy for creating exceptional donor experiences across events, athletics competitions, hospitality spaces, and special engagement opportunities.
- Identify new and creative ways to engage donors and prospects through memorable experiences connected to Virginia Athletics.
- Develop experiences that recognize philanthropy and provide donors with meaningful access and connection to student-athletes, coaches, programs, facilities, and Athletics leadership.
- Partner with development officers to design experiences that support donor cultivation, solicitation, engagement, and stewardship.
- Establish service and hospitality standards for VAF donor-facing experiences.
- Continuously evaluate the donor experience and identify opportunities to elevate VAF's hospitality and event offerings.

Special Events Strategy & Execution

- Lead the strategic planning, management, and execution of all Virginia Athletics Foundation events, including but not limited to:
 - Sabre Society experiences, Cavaliers for Life initiatives, endowed scholarship celebrations, donor recognition events, facility dedications, golf tournaments, sport reunions, campaign events, postseason events, 50th anniversaries, and special celebrations.
- Develop event timelines, budgets, project plans, and execution strategies for events.
- Manage invitation strategy, registration, guest experience, seating, and event reporting.
- Oversee all event logistics including venues, catering, transportation, hotels, décor, gifts, audiovisual production, security, parking, media coordination, and vendor management.
- Evaluate event success through measurable outcomes and implement continuous improvements including post-event brief and debrief meetings with the Chief of Staff and Executive Director.



Premium Hospitality & Suite Operations

- Lead VAF's donor-facing premium hospitality experiences at Scott Stadium, John Paul Jones Arena, Disharoon Park, and other Virginia Athletics venues.
- Oversee the in-person donor experience within VAF suites and designated hospitality spaces.
- Establish game-day service standards and expectations.
- Develop staffing plans for premium hospitality areas and VAF-hosted spaces.
- Train and prepare staff and volunteers for donor-facing game-day responsibilities.
- Coordinate with Athletics, facilities, ticketing, catering, security, parking, and other partners on premium hospitality operations.
- Conduct pre-event walkthroughs and ensure hospitality spaces are prepared for donor arrival.
- Serve as a visible VAF host during designated home athletics events.
- Respond to donor and guest needs during competitions.
- Evaluate game-day experiences and recommend improvements to hospitality offerings.
- Suite load-in and load-out coordination for Football and Baseball

VIP & Major Donor Experiences

- Create highly personalized experiences for VAF's principal and major gift donors and prospects in partnership with development officers.
- Develop unique opportunities that provide meaningful access to Virginia Athletics.
- Coordinate donor visits involving coaches, student-athletes, Athletics leadership, facilities, practices, competitions, and other appropriate experiences.
- Serve as an on-site host for key donors and prospects when appropriate.
- Develop special experiences around significant philanthropic commitments, milestones, and celebrations.
- Partner with development officers to ensure experiences are appropriate for the donor's interests and relationship with Virginia Athletics.

Event Production & Vendor Management

- Source and manage vendors necessary for the physical production and execution of VAF events.
- Manage relationships with venues, caterers, rental companies, florists, décor companies, audiovisual and production companies, entertainment providers, transportation companies, hotels, and other event partners.
- Conduct vendor and venue walkthroughs.
- Negotiate event-related pricing and services in coordination with VAF's business office.
- Review event proposals and determine appropriate production elements.
- Coordinate vendor arrival, setup, production, and breakdown.
- Ensure vendors meet VAF's expectations for quality, professionalism, and guest service.
- Manage event budgets and make recommendations regarding investments that enhance the donor experience.

Event Programming & Experience Design

- Develop creative event concepts and programming that reflect VAF's mission and fundraising priorities.
- Determine appropriate program flow, speakers, storytelling elements, entertainment, décor, and experiential components.
- Work with coaches, student-athletes, development officers, Athletics leadership, and other participants to prepare for donor-facing events.
- Develop detailed run-of-show documents for major events.
- Conduct rehearsals when appropriate.
- Ensure events are engaging, appropriately paced, and centered on donor experience.



- Identify opportunities to incorporate Virginia Athletics traditions, student-athlete stories, philanthropy impact, and program achievements into events.

Donor Hospitality Standards

- Establish consistent hospitality standards across VAF donor-facing events and experiences.
- Ensure guests receive a warm, personalized, and professional experience from arrival through departure.
- Train VAF staff, interns, volunteers, and other event personnel on hospitality expectations.
- Develop protocols for welcoming and recognizing key donors and guests.
- Ensure VAF leadership and development officers are appropriately prepared for donor-facing events.
- Identify opportunities to surprise and delight donors through thoughtful hospitality and personalized touches.

Cross-Department Collaboration

- Partner with VAF development officers to understand the purpose, audience, and fundraising objectives of donor events and experiences.
- Collaborate with Virginia Athletics, coaches, facilities, marketing, communications, ticketing, operations, security, and other departments necessary to execute successful experiences.
- Coordinate with University partners on events involving University leadership, facilities, or shared audiences.
- Serve as VAF's primary resource for the creative and physical execution of donor events and experiences.
- Represent VAF in event planning meetings with internal and external partners.
- Manage the donor experience team budget

Partnership with the Senior Director of Donor Experience Operations

- Partner with VAF leadership, Athletics, University departments, coaches, and external stakeholders to execute strategic donor engagement opportunities.
- Serve as the primary event planning resource for Foundation leadership.

Technology

Maintain proficiency and provide strategic oversight of donor experience technologies including:

- Salesforce
- Blackthorn
- ThankView
- Paperless Post
- Paciolan
- Eloqua
- SharePoint

Other Duties

- Perform additional responsibilities as assigned.



QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum Education/Certifications: Bachelor's degree required.

Minimum Experience: The minimum years of applicable and relevant work experience that would be necessary to effectively perform the position.

- **Senior Director level:** 8+ years of experience in event management, donor relations, hospitality, or related field, including significant leadership and team management experience.
- **Director level:** 5-7 years experience in event management, donor relations, hospitality, or related field, including supervisory experience.

Equipment Utilized: Experience with Salesforce, Blackthorn, ThankView, Paperless Post, and Paciolan preferred but not required.

QUALITIES/CHARACTERISTICS

- Experience in higher education, intercollegiate athletics, higher education advancement, or nonprofit fundraising.
- Experience managing donor stewardship and major fundraising events.
- Demonstrated experience supervising professional staff.
- Experience overseeing premium hospitality operations and donor engagement strategies.
- Budget management experience.
- Knowledge of fundraising CRM systems and event management software.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Benefits*

- Annual salaried position (compensation based on years of experience)
- Annual incentive program (based on staff performance)
- Paid personal leave and a minimum of 12 paid holidays; 12 Remote days
- Health, dental, life, and long-term disability insurance
- 401k Plan with employer contribution
- On-site parking provided
- Football and Basketball season tickets for employee and eligible family members
- Family pass for regular season home athletics UVA Olympic sport events
- Recreation pass providing access to all UVA recreation facilities

*Benefits subject to change

Physical Requirements:

- Ability to remain at workstation for long periods of time.
- Move, transport, raise or lower items of 10lbs. or less.

**Work Schedule**

- Standard Hours: 8:30 am to 5 pm
- 40 Hours per week
- Includes (as applicable): Event Days

Office Location:

Bryant Hall at Scott Stadium
1815 Stadium Rd
Charlottesville, VA 22903

VAF is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer. We make every effort to provide fair and equal treatment on the basis of merit in all our employment decisions, including but not limited to decisions concerning hiring, retention, promotions, working conditions, compensation, benefits, training, and all other privileges, terms, and conditions of employment. We pledge to treat all employees fairly without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, genetics, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Any applicant with a disability may contact VAF at 434-982-5555 or vafweb@virginia.edu to request an accommodation related to the application process.