

American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation President

The Board seeks an externally-facing senior executive with instant credibility among leading academic institutions, researchers and thought leaders, to drive their engagement with one of the globe's leading sponsors of research by international scholars.

Success will depend on a deep understanding of American and German academic, private sector and civil society institutions and cultures, sustained outreach and engagement campaigns, and fundraising solicitations to broaden the impact of this USA-based 501c3.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation was established in 1953 to advance research in service to humanity, and has since built a strong network of 30,000 alumni "Humboldtians" across the globe in 140 countries (inc. 57 Nobel Laureates). The Humboldt Foundation treasures the diverse perspectives and excellence represented in the work of individual Humboldtian scholars. Each Humboldtian contributes in a unique way to the advancement of science, humanities and other fields of research, and each has an ongoing relationship with the Foundation and fellow Humboldtians.

Of these networks, the strongest outside of Germany is the almost 6,000 member American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (American Friends) network spread across 448 colleges and universities, with others working in the private, nonprofit and government sectors. Approximately 65% of the research is in life and physical sciences, 30% in the humanities and social sciences, and 5% in engineering. Given the world's focus on such intersecting fields as information tech, bio-tech, AI, climate science, clean energy, bio-diversity and other fields, not to mention research into the dynamics among peoples and associated humanities fields, there is much room to explore new areas of endeavor and cooperation with USA-based researchers. Similarly, USA-based Humboldtians currently cluster among academic institutions in California, New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, and there is significant room to grow productive relationships in other states and in research universities nationally.

[The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation](#) is located in Bonn and Berlin, while the [American Friends](#) organization is a 501c3 nonprofit located in Washington DC. The two institutions are independent and interconnected. Both believe that the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation should become a more recognized player in American academic research circles. The objective of American Friends is to have the Foundation recognized as taking a prominent and complementary place besides scholarly organizations that currently are more instantly known in the USA - Rhodes (founded 1903), Fulbright (1946), Truman (1975) and some more recent programs like those offered by the Gates and Google foundations. There is a strong view that humanity advances faster through collaborations and perspectives that cross boundaries... in much the same sense that [Alexander von Humboldt](#) crossed boundaries in his life and work in order to advance our understanding of the cosmos.

Humboldt was an extraordinary man. He had broad research interests, and was a keen observer of different peoples from around the world. Unrestrained by national boundaries, academic boundaries, or boundaries of 18th century research practice, he recognized the interrelation of the physical and biological sciences and their systems. He saw humanity as affecting and being affected by nature in an exquisitely complex but observable and measurable relationship. Humboldt contributed greatly to various fields – he was the first to publish works describing human-induced climate change, and was a key architect of what later became standard quantitative research methodologies. It was this tradition that prompted the organization's founding by then West Germany's Konrad Adenauer and its subsequent decades of beneficial impact promoting research internationally.

The President, supported by a prestigious Board and professional staff focused on scholarly engagement, fund-raising and friend-raising, will expand awareness and support for the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and its programs in the USA.



BASIC FUNCTION

Reporting to the Board of the American Friends through its Chair, the President serves as the organization's chief executive with strategic and day-to-day management responsibility, including responsibility for: all staff, staffing and consultant hiring/retention decisions; management of finances, operations, programs and partnerships; ensuring alignment and positive relationships with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation staff located in Germany; outreach and support to US Humboldtian alumni for mission-related functions and programs; all USA-based fundraising and friend-raising programs; and all branding, communications and advocacy.

In concert with the Board, the President ensures that the organization implements strong financial controls, and sound management practices and workflows. In sum, the administrative architecture of American Friends must satisfy regulatory and legal requirements in both Germany and the USA.

The President will be the American Friends's chief fundraiser, friend-raiser and advocate for the organization, with contributed funds used in the USA to build out local programs and relationships. The President will work closely with the Board to assist in identifying potential candidates for Board membership who will strengthen the organization's effectiveness, including through fundraising, friend-raising and outreach to alumni, scholars and researchers. Part of the role of the American Friends organization is to engage in dialogue on current research policy, science policy, and science diplomacy approaches in the United States and Germany. The purpose is to share knowledge and help inform the Foundation and Humboldtians as they grapple with issues of global concern including those related to enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion. Attitudes on race, gender, orientation, ability/disability and other matters have a recognized impact on research practices. The President will position the organization to advance dialogue, increase knowledge and include the broadest range of research thought-leaders on both sides of the Atlantic in the beneficial work of the Foundation.

The President will speak publicly about American Friends, its programs, alumni, the impact of Humboldtian endeavors, and opportunities for collaboration. As part of this role the President will work closely with scholars and leaders from the private sector, civil society, nonprofits and government. The President must be able to gracefully communicate and engage with a broad range of different people from different countries, and facilitate exchanges between American and German thought leaders.

As capacity-building funds become available, there are opportunities to introduce an array of new programs. Such might include new and engaging services, social media interactions, and in-person events for USA Humboldtians, and recruiting initiatives that bring new researchers into the von Humboldt fold. Advancing German/American research collaborations and dialogue that involve academic, nonprofit and private sector partnerships are among expansion opportunities that the President will explore.

Metrics for success of the President and American Friends include concrete indicators of increased or improved:

- Humboldtian alumni engagement with the American Friends and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation programs;
- engagement with United States scholars, universities, colleges and other research institutions;
- function as a knowledge clearinghouse and bridge that enables the German and American government and other actors to advance trans-national research cooperation;

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- contributed revenue to support American Friends programs and outreach in United States;
- relationships with private sector and civil society organizations with interests in both Germany and United States;
- understanding of policies and practices that accelerate research and international collaboration in the USA and Germany and that help to help solve important national and global problems.

American Friends has five staff in addition to the President, which include the Chief of Operations/Director of Communications and the Director of Advancement. The annual budget is about \$1m. All additional contributed revenue will fund the build-out of American Friends programs.

Specific responsibilities and oversight duties include:

GENERAL MANAGEMENT & FINANCE

- In partnership with the Board, provide vision and strategic focus, ensuring that American Friends advances priorities defined by the Board, Humboldtians (alumni) and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation;
- Improve services, programs and outreach to constituents in the USA;
- Shape an organizational climate that attracts, retains, motivates and develops a multi-cultural, diverse, high-quality staff and Board;
- Ensure that the organization adheres to a sustainable financial plan based on a Board-approved annual budget that also has the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation; ensure financial performance positively tracks budget and operating plans; foster an atmosphere of transparency and accountability in matters relating to the organization's financial condition;
- Maintain lean overhead and support functions like finance, HR and office tech, using outsourced resources when beneficial; ensure most investment, expense and time spent by Board and staff is routed to mission-critical programs, external outreach and effective fundraising.

PROGRAMS, MARKETING AND FUNDRAISING

- Maintain, promote and provide visibility for American Friends by serving as a credible, articulate and effective spokesperson, in person and in writing; collect and leverage evidence of impact of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, ensuring that the Foundation is recognized in the United States for its leadership and outcomes;
- Function as the organization's point person for driving increased in-kind and financial contributions from individual and institutional donors; encourage the Board and staff to view programs, alumni and partners through a resource development lens and integrate funding solicitations (direct and subtle) into routine American Friends communications; collaborate with the organization's experienced Advancement Director, the Development Committee Chair and others in the American Friends family to target, approach and solicit;
- Personally develop relationships and drive fundraising solicitations, especially with major private, government and private sector donors; develop fundraising alliances, oversee fundraising efforts and campaigns, create special American Friends donor cultivation events and opportunities; develop corporate sponsorships;
- Build out externally facing programs that attract the interest of alumni (Humboldtians), and that drive demand among researchers to become Humboldtians; provide interesting social media interactions and mobile-enabled communications; orchestrate networking and other events that

bring together influencers and deciders at academic, private sector, civil society and government institutions; continually evaluate existing programs and seek ways to improve engagement.

TEAM DEVELOPMENT

- Listen to staff views and continue building a team focused on program quality, program funding and program expansion; develop staff recognition and engender a collaborative environment; upgrade personnel competencies required for American Friends' future;
- Manage, supervise and evaluate staff to ensure that the team remains well-suited to addressing challenges and opportunities for the American Friends organization; hire, train, retain and evolve staff in ways that improve services.

BOARD RELATIONS

- With the Board Chair, coordinate the efforts of various Board committees to ensure that time invested advances the mission of promoting the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, and that the administrative and financial infrastructure is lean and effective; provide ongoing communication and transparency to the Board; implement Board policies, program goals and objectives;
- Collaborate with the Board Chair and Governance Committee to identify and recruit new Board members whose talents, commitments and abilities are congruent with the needs and mission of American Friends; involve Board members in the fundraising lifecycle of identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and thanking individual, corporate, foundation and government funders; work with the Board to expand fundraising and partnerships that result in more scholars interacting with American Friends.

QUALIFICATIONS and CHARACTERISTICS

The President will be an experienced leader possessing the following key qualifications and characteristics:

- Strong experience in multi-cultural settings, with particular favor given to experience forging relations between German and American professionals and scholars; comfort with an environment populated by scholars and academics with terminal degrees is required; knowledge of the German language is required;
- Fundraising experience is favored, including annual, endowment, event-based fundraising, and principal or major gifts from individuals and institutional sources; other useful experience might include: web, social media, leveraging fundraising databases for donor segmentation, research and volunteer management, developing sponsorships with private sector partners, establishing stewardship and donor recognition programs that sustain long-term relationships; etc.;
- Strong general and financial management skills, with demonstrated ability to build, manage, motivate and inspire others to productive action;
- An exceptional communicator, both in writing and orally who can translate the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's mission and programs into engagement and fundraising initiatives;
- Builds constructive working relationships characterized by a high level of acceptance, cooperation, and mutual respect; promotes cooperation and commitment within a team to achieve goals and deliverables; seeks to find common ground and preserve relationships;

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- Seeks different points of view and leverages diverse perspectives in group processes and decision-making; checks own views against the views of others and has a sense of perspective and humor.

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