

WEBSITE CASE STUDY

University of Washington School of Nursing

Interim Chief Advancement Officer and Advancement Capacity Support

Project focus	Interim Chief Advancement Officer and Advancement Capacity Support
Service areas	Development assessment, interim advancement leadership, major gift strategy, event strategy, staffing transition support, coaching and training

Overview

UW School of Nursing is a nationally recognized leader in nursing education, research, and practice. Its mission centers on advancing nursing science and practice, generating knowledge, and educating future leaders to improve health for all. Advancement work needed to support that mission with stronger donor strategy, clear leadership, and reliable execution.

The School engaged The Ostara Group during a period of growth, transition, and rising advancement opportunity.

The Need

The school needed near-term leadership continuity and hands-on fundraising capacity while building a stronger long-term approach to donor cultivation, stewardship, major gifts, events, and advancement planning.

Ostara's Work

- Began in 2015 with development assessment, strategy, and planning.
- Reviewed major gift activities, prospecting and cultivation practices, donor pool strength, giving trends, stewardship opportunities, and major gift potential among current and future donors.
- Developed recommendations for a sustainable donor cultivation program focused on board and staff participation, prospect identification, donor acquisition, cultivation, stewardship, renewal, upgrade strategy, moves management, top prospect strategy, and early planning for a Centennial donor engagement effort.
- Supported event strategy and management for the School of Nursing annual awards event, including sponsorship outreach, matching gift planning, invitation strategy, guest tracking, event communications, vendor coordination, program development, and post-event stewardship.
- Expanded the partnership in 2017 into interim advancement leadership, development strategy, interim staffing, coaching, and training.
- Led and managed the CAO hiring process internally in collaboration with University HR and key stakeholders. Oversaw staffing transition, and executed other staff moves on behalf of the School.

Engagement Focus

Focus area	What Ostara assessed
Leadership continuity	Providing experienced advancement leadership during a period of staff transition.
Donor strategy	Strengthening cultivation, stewardship, renewal, upgrade, and major gift planning.
Fundraising systems	Building practical tools for moves management, prospect strategy, event follow-up, and advancement execution.
Staff support	Coaching and training the team while maintaining momentum during transition.

Recommendations

Ostara helped the school move beyond a sponsorship-centered event model by strengthening individual giving strategy, sponsorship outreach, matching gift planning, invitation strategy, guest tracking, event communications, vendor coordination, program development, and post-event stewardship. Scott Sadler served in an interim Chief Advancement Officer support role during a period of staff transition, providing leadership continuity while also supporting additional HR-related activities.

Outcome

The engagement gave UW School of Nursing experienced advancement leadership at a critical time. Ostara helped maintain momentum, support staff through transition, strengthen development planning, keep donor strategy moving, and provide hands-on execution for priority activities. The school extended the engagement so Ostara could continue the work at the originally intended coverage level. The extension added 100 hours to the contract, bringing total contract hours to 676 and restoring interim coverage for

the remainder of the project. For a school advancing nursing science, education, and practice across Washington and beyond, the work provided stability, structure, and practical fundraising capacity.

Client Testimonial



Jennifer Thompson

The Ostara Group in Seattle worked for us at the UW School of Nursing for several months in 2017. Ostara Senior Strategist Scott Sadler served as interim Chief Advancement Officer, who was an excellent resource for improving our Advancement unit's motivation and organizational skills. He was calm, organized, thoughtful and managed the personalities very effectively. He helped the group develop a framework for organizing their work, making their calls, and moving their projects forward. He also introduced a method of communicating their ongoing efforts that was widely praised and which is still in use. Finally, he assisted in the successful search for a permanent CAO. Overall, we were very impressed with his skills and ability to read people and make thoughtful suggestions for positive change. We would highly recommend Ostara for similar work in higher ed or other non-profit institutions.

Jen Thompson
COO,
UW School of Nursing



Dan Peterson

Retired, Senior Advancement Professional
January 9, 2018

Very much appreciate and value the consulting services Ostara provided to UW School of Nursing. Your ability to help the advancement team prioritize and structure its work, the reorganization of the volunteer board, and the strong partnership you effected with the Dean were all first-quality and hugely helpful. Our new CAO is already benefiting from your good work! Thanks!

Dan Peterson
SVP Advancement
UW