

## WEBSITE CASE STUDY

# University of Washington Bothell

## Development Strategy and Advancement Structure Roadmap

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| <b>Project focus</b> | Development Strategy and Advancement Structure Roadmap                                                                                |
| <b>Service areas</b> | Advancement strategy, advancement assessment, staffing structure, fundraising strategy, alumni engagement, communications integration |

### Overview

University of Washington Bothell engaged The Ostara Group at an important point in its advancement growth. The campus was preparing for a new strategic plan and needed a clearer path for fundraising, alumni engagement, communications, staffing, and advancement structure.

UW Bothell provides access to an excellent University of Washington education with an emphasis on experiential learning, hands-on research, community engagement, and close student-faculty relationships. Its advancement program needed the strategy, structure, and capacity to support that mission.

### The Need

The campus needed a practical advancement strategy aligned with academic priorities, donor opportunity, school-level planning, alumni engagement, communications, and the role of academic leaders in philanthropy.

### Ostara's Work

- Engaged in December 2018 to develop a practical advancement strategy.
- Assessed the overall advancement operation, future structure, staffing needs, fundraising strategy, communications and marketing integration, alumni engagement, and the role of academic leaders in philanthropy.
- Analyzed background materials, facilitated an advancement team focus group, and conducted 24 interviews with UW Bothell leaders, advancement staff, deans, advisory board members, and UW partners.

### Assessment Focus

| Focus area                          | What Ostara assessed                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Vision and planning</b>          | Aligning campus strategy, school-level priorities, and advancement plans.                                                        |
| <b>Culture of philanthropy</b>      | Engaging the chancellor, deans, faculty, advisory boards, and advancement staff in a shared approach to donor relationships.     |
| <b>Fundraising strategy</b>         | Strengthening annual giving, discovery, portfolio management, major gifts, planned giving, and campaign activity.                |
| <b>Communications and marketing</b> | Connecting fundraising, alumni relations, and institutional storytelling in a more integrated advancement model.                 |
| <b>Staffing and systems</b>         | Clarifying roles, reducing non-revenue activity, strengthening support functions, and aligning staff structure with opportunity. |

### Recommendations

Ostara found a campus with strong community value, a growing alumni base, committed staff, and meaningful momentum in donor engagement. The report also identified opportunities to strengthen planning, clarify advancement roles, support deans more consistently, improve portfolio strategy, focus frontline fundraisers on relationship and revenue generation, and invest in targeted staffing capacity. Ostara recommended school-specific advancement plans, stronger collaboration with deans, clearer performance goals, renewed prospect strategy, more focused discovery work, advisory board fundraising strategy, improved alumni engagement metrics, and a future advancement structure aligned with fundraising, alumni relations, donor services, and communications.

### Outcome

When an unexpected leadership disruption created uncertainty for the advancement team, UW Bothell used Ostara's report as a roadmap. The recommendations helped the team stay focused, organize priorities, and continue moving work forward during a difficult transition. For a public university rooted in access, interdisciplinary learning, community engagement, and regional impact, the project connected advancement strategy to institutional mission and gave UW Bothell a practical plan to strengthen philanthropic culture, clarify staff roles, engage academic leaders, and build a stronger foundation for sustainable fundraising growth.

