

WEBSITE CASE STUDY

Chaminade University of Honolulu

Assessment and Staffing Structure Review

Project focus	Assessment and Staffing Structure Review
Service areas	Advancement assessment, staffing structure review, fundraising systems, advancement planning

Overview

Chaminade University of Honolulu engaged The Ostara Group during a period of advancement transition and institutional growth. Under the leadership of Dr. Lynn Babington, the university desired a clear assessment of its advancement program, staffing structure, fundraising systems, and capacity for long term philanthropic growth.

Chaminade's mission is rooted in Catholic, Marianist, and liberal arts traditions. The university prepares students for life, service, and successful careers. Its advancement program needed the structure, strategy, and staffing to support that mission.

The Need

Chaminade needed practical guidance on how to organize Advancement for stronger fundraising performance while honoring the university's unique location, culture, mission, and role serving Hawai'i and the Pacific.

Ostara's Work

- Conducted a comprehensive advancement assessment and staffing structure review in 2020.
- Examined vision, culture of philanthropy, alumni relations, annual giving, major giving, planned giving, corporate and foundation giving, team dynamics, staffing structure, planning, data, communications, and donor engagement.
- Interviewed advancement staff, university leaders, members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, and longtime university supporters.
- Reviewed advancement materials, systems, policies, planning documents, and communications.

Assessment Focus

Focus area	What Ostara assessed
Culture	How well university leaders, board members, faculty, staff, and advancement professionals understood and supported philanthropy.
Capability	Whether staff and campus partners had the tools, training, experience, and systems needed to succeed.
Capacity	Whether staffing, infrastructure, processes, and investment matched the university's fundraising expectations.

Recommendations

The assessment identified a strong institutional mission, committed presidential leadership, and significant philanthropic potential. It also pointed to clear opportunities to strengthen advancement leadership, clarify roles, improve planning, deepen alumni engagement, sharpen annual and major giving strategy, strengthen donor communications, and align staffing with long term goals. Ostara delivered a practical roadmap focused on building a stronger institution-wide culture of philanthropy, translating Chaminade's strategic vision into a compelling case for support, creating clearer advancement plans, strengthening alumni relationships, improving donor strategy, and redesigning the staffing structure to support sustainable growth.

Outcome

Chaminade completely retooled its advancement program in response to the report. The assessment gave university leaders a direct, actionable view of what needed to change. It helped Chaminade move from a transitional advancement structure to a more focused model for fundraising, alumni engagement, and donor relationship building. For a mission-centered university serving Hawai'i and the Pacific, Ostara's work connected advancement structure to institutional purpose and helped align people, roles, systems, and strategy around a stronger philanthropic future.

Client Testimonial

"The Ostara team provided an in-depth analysis of Chaminade University's fundraising functions, a small Catholic university in Hawai'i, and designed a strategic approach to reorganizing the Advancement division, tailored to our unique location and culture. This very tailored approach helped guide the development of a highly functioning Advancement division at the university."

Lynn Babington, PhD

President, Chaminade University of Honolulu