This leadership profile is intended to provide information about Yale University and the position of Executive Director of the Association of Yale Alumni. It is designed to assist qualified individuals in assessing their interest in this position.
The Opportunity

The Association of Yale Alumni (AYA) serves Yale and its alumni, oversees the direction of alumni organizations and programs, provides a channel for communication between Yale University’s alumni and the institution, and maintains the stature of Yale University. To continue and to accelerate the AYA’s capacity to do all these things, the Association seeks an executive director to serve as its chief executive officer.

The executive director of the AYA will have the opportunity to lead an organization with a strong recent history of innovation and effectiveness as well as guide alumni relations at one of the nation’s most prestigious institutions.

In recent years, the AYA has been exceptionally active and successful at combining new models of alumni engagement with traditional alumni relations efforts. In doing so, the Association has extended and enhanced Yale’s institutional brand and reputation, and it has engaged ever more broadly and deeply with Yale alumni.

Building on that track record of success, the new executive director will have the opportunity to review the Association’s progress, prioritize the Association’s efforts moving forward, improve the Association’s relationships within and across the university community, enhance the profile of the AYA among university leadership, and build new management, financial, and reporting processes. Reporting to the Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development and working closely with a deeply engaged and passionate board and staff of 35, the executive director will be a public face of Yale University and one of its most active and visible ambassadors.

The successful candidate will resonate closely with and advocate passionately on behalf of Yale University’s mission, values, and goals. To this end, status as a member of Yale’s alumni body will be a distinct advantage. The executive director will be an established leader and manager of people and programs within large and complex organizations and have a collaborative spirit and enthusiasm for representing Yale to external audiences large and small. A demonstrated history of successful program development as well as experience with decision making and setting priorities is essential, as is knowledge of emerging technologies, especially in regard to communications and branding. A bachelor’s degree is required, and an advanced degree is highly desirable. Most importantly, the executive director must have a passion for connecting alumni to their university and for connecting the university to its alumni, and a track record of having accomplished this or a similarly challenging task.

For information regarding how to express a candidacy or to make a nomination for this position, please see the section entitled “Procedure for Candidacy” at the end of this document.
The Association of Yale Alumni (AYA)

All Yale graduates, as well as current students and others who have completed at least one semester in a degree program at Yale, are automatically members of the AYA and may be actively affiliated with the AYA through the building block constituencies described below.

- The Yale College class structure offers many opportunities for interaction – from on-campus quinquennial reunions (which drew over 7,000 attendees this past spring) and mini-reunions away from New Haven to individual class programs and events.

- Geographically-based Yale clubs and associations offer yet another opportunity for alumni to connect with one another. With some 170 Yale clubs/associations worldwide, Yale alumni around the globe can participate in a range of social, cultural, educational, and community service activities.

- AYA programs are, of course, open to graduate and professional school alumni. A number of professional schools have established alumni associations, and the AYA maintains a liaison with professional school alumni relations staff. The AYA has direct responsibility for managing alumni relations for the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

- Shared interest and identity groups (SIGs) are affinity groups through which Yale graduates connect based on a shared interest (professional, volunteer, or based on student experiences) and/or shared racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, or other identity. In many cases, SIGs include graduates from a range of degree programs, geographies, and years of graduation.

AYA History

Over 200 years of Yale alumni activity — the longest record of any American university — began in 1792 with the election of the first class officers. Classmates returning to campus eventually began a cycle of reunions that was refined into the five-year system of class reunions observed today. As Yale graduates sought each other's company across the country, Yale clubs began to organize in the larger cities.

Nearly 180 years later, the Yale Corporation would commission a study on alumni relations that ultimately led in the early 1970s to the creation of the Association of Yale Alumni, its Board of Governors, and larger representative body, the Assembly. The Assembly convened for the first time in 1972, laying the groundwork for an organization and governance structure that has in the decades since done much to foster engagement and help Yale alumni affiliate more closely with each other and the work of the university.

Strategic Planning

The AYA and the alumni community have benefitted in significant ways from two focused strategic planning efforts. The first plan – Ambassadors for Yale: The AYA Strategic Plan – was adopted in January 2008 and emphasized the critical ambassadorial role played by alumni volunteers. It celebrated the powerful combination of traditional programming and new opportunities for alumni engagement and volunteer leadership. Building on this initial plan, the
second strategic plan – *Yale Ambassadors in Action* – was approved by the AYA Board of Governors in November 2012. Recognizing the fundamental desire on the part of alumni to shape their world and to serve Yale, the second plan focuses on volunteer leadership and alumni engagement to support and enhance an essential aspect of Yale: enabling Yale alumni to impact the world around them. Both plans can be found in their entirety at http://www.aya.yale.edu/content/strategic-plan.

Significantly more information about the AYA may be found on its website: www.aya.yale.edu.

**Yale University**

Founded in 1701, Yale University is the third-oldest institution of higher education in the United States and one of the most prestigious universities in the world. Yale’s 5,300 undergraduate students learn to lead and serve through a strong academic curriculum and active participation in a host of extracurricular activities. Yale is also a major research university. Led by a distinguished faculty, it also carries on its mission of education and research in 13 graduate and professional schools that enroll some 6,500 students. The university is home to one of the world’s great libraries and three outstanding public museums and galleries that further Yale’s teaching mission and help to enrich the cultural climate of the university and city.

Yale’s 11,800 students come from all 50 American states and from 108 countries. The 3,200-member faculty is a richly diverse group of men and women who are leaders in their respective fields. Fifty-one Nobel Laureates have been affiliated with the university as students, faculty, and staff. Yale has produced many notable alumni, including five U.S. Presidents, 19 U.S. Supreme Court Justices, and several foreign heads of state. There are more than 165,000 living alumni.

University assets include an endowment of over $25 billion, 15 million volumes in more than a dozen libraries, and 440 buildings. The central campus covers 342 acres; Yale’s buildings and grounds comprise what one architecture critic has called “the most beautiful urban campus in America.” Yale’s West Campus, located seven miles west of downtown New Haven on 136 acres, was acquired in 2007 and includes 1.6 million square feet of research, office, and warehouse space that serves as the home for the Yale School of Nursing and provides opportunities to enhance the university’s medical and scientific research activities and other academic programs. The university also maintains over 600 acres of athletic fields and natural preserves just a short bus ride from the center of New Haven.
New Haven, Connecticut

New Haven has been home to Yale University for nearly three centuries. The university and its hometown have a strong relationship, renewed and expanded over two decades through the leadership of former Mayor DeStefano and President-Emeritus Levin, and continued now by Mayor Harp and President Salovey and countless community and campus partners. The city’s renaissance has been recognized by major media in recent years, including a 2014 New York Daily News banner headline proclaiming, “New Haven is happening,” The New York Post declared in 2013, “New Haven has arrived,” and the Washington Post last year said New Haven “has come into its own.”

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Among the objectives on which the executive director will be judged during his or her first three years in office are the following, which are presented in no particular order of importance.

Calibrate program priorities
The AYA has been tremendously successful in recent years at engaging Yale alumni in service activities nationally and internationally. Whether by providing labor or counsel, Yale alumni have found opportunities through the AYA to further the university’s core value of service. These activities are highly regarded by the university and are examples of its impact on its students and the world. At the same time, the AYA has focused somewhat fewer activities and less of its resources on programs that provide service to the on-campus Yale community, including its current students. As financial resources have become more constrained in recent times, the need to prioritize these various programs and situate them in the context of the many needs of Yale and its alumni cannot be understated. The executive director will work with the board, AYA staff, and university leadership to evaluate the mix of AYA programming and to ensure an appropriate blend of service to society in Yale’s name and service to the university in the name of its alumni.

Build relationships across the campus
The AYA has also been very successful at spreading Yale’s message across the country and the globe. The substantial increase in programming and the scope of services provided to communities away from campus have consumed tremendous time and energy of the Association’s leadership. Calibrating the priorities of the AYA going forward will require effectively blending those programs with renewed and focused efforts to build relationships within and across the university itself. Of particular importance is the AYA’s role as convener for alumni relations efforts of the graduate and professional schools and other curricular and co-curricular units across campus. Over the last decade, the AYA’s expanded programming has led
to substantial growth in the number of graduates of Yale's professional schools engaging with AYA-supported programs. The next stage of evolution for the Association is to provide additional connectivity to many other potential partners across the campus, including athletics, admissions, career services, and development. The executive director’s new reporting relationship to the Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development enables improved coordination between the two departments of the university principally charged with outreach to Yale's alumni and encourages greater connectivity and synergies.

**Articulate deliverables and measure the return on investment**

Yale University invests over $3.3 million annually to support the AYA, representing over 50 percent of the Association's budget. The balance of funding comes in the form of endowment income, revenues from the university's affinity credit card, gifts, and other income. The AYA generates a return on that investment in many ways; the Association's work in engaging alumni in Yale-related activities, executing Yale's central mission and articulating its values has accelerated considerably and successfully in recent years. The next iteration of this success, then, is to agree upon and commit to a well-defined set of deliverables from the AYA's efforts in keeping with the goals and aspirations of the university as well as those enumerated in the Association’s strategic plan, and to measure the Association's effectiveness in generating those deliverables. As the AYA builds a case for increased resources, the ability to define the return on the university’s investment and the increased benefit the university will receive from an increased investment is critical.

While there are many potential deliverables, one that emerges not only at Yale but also from emerging best practices in alumni organizations nationally is increased attention to current students and young alumni, particularly in regard to their career aspirations. The executive director will consider this emerging trend along with the many other opportunities the Association has to relate most meaningfully with members of the university’s current and future alumni community.

**Build strong management processes and make best use of financial resources**

The AYA has developed, in recent years, a culture of strategic planning that permeates both its New Haven organization and many of the alumni programs the AYA supports and oversees. The current strategic plan is both expansive in its vision and realistic about the financial constraints on that vision. The executive director will work with the staff and the board to prioritize the initiatives articulated in the strategic plan within the framework of the financial resources available to the Association.

The executive director will establish an expectation that the administrative business of the Association will operate at the level of best practices and will work to identify structures and resources necessary to enable those practices. The need to focus on human resources, management processes, and budgetary discipline, particularly in light of competing priorities and growing aspirations, must be a high priority for the executive director and will be particularly important as the AYA continues to seek ways to innovate in the future. Focus on technology is another key priority. A number of key IT systems affecting AYA operations are in the midst of modifications or require upgrade or replacement. The executive director will need to assess the opportunities in the area of marketing and communications and guide the AYA within the constraints of available resources. The AYA does not currently have a dedicated marketing or communications arm.
Personal Qualities and Characteristics

The executive director of the AYA will, first and foremost, relate to and embody the ethos of the university and its alumni, including the desire to share the knowledge and talents nurtured by the university with the world. To this end, the executive director will demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit and approach, seeking always to expand the reach and the impact of the alumni body both within and external to the university. While a history with and understanding of the university, including status as a Yale graduate, would be extremely helpful in this regard, candidates with a strong track record of success in higher education leadership and in adapting to different university cultures will also be given full consideration.

The executive director will also be a successful leader of programs with a track record of creating and executing strategic and operational plans, leading and managing teams effectively, and fiscal responsibility. The successful candidate will have nurtured and developed talent within his or her previous organizations on both the professional and volunteer levels and will demonstrate a successful history of working with volunteer boards and infrastructures. The executive director will have worked in large, multilateral organizations with multiple overlapping constituencies and will have a well-earned reputation for successfully navigating complex political environments with competing priorities and limited resources.

That superior relationship-building and communication skills are required is, of course, axiomatic. Even more important is the ability and willingness to represent the AYA and Yale University effectively in public settings as a principal “face” of the institution. To this end, the ability to speak effectively to groups, large and small, is absolutely required. In addition, candidates with experience developing a distinctive and compelling brand for organizations and with communicating that brand effectively will be at a particular advantage.

In addition to the above, the ideal candidate will possess the following:

- An undergraduate degree, with an advanced degree highly preferred;
- A collaborative spirit and track record of close collaboration with institutional partners;
- An understanding of emerging technologies, especially with regard to communications (i.e., social media, etc.);
- The ability and willingness to relate to diverse people and constituencies, including global constituencies; and
- The core attributes of great institutional leaders, including unimpeachable integrity; expansive vision; personal authenticity and high emotional intelligence; outstanding judgment; decisiveness, particularly under stress; courage of convictions; political savvy; tolerance for institutional ambiguity; and a sense of humor.
Procedure for Candidacy

Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Review of applications will continue until the position is filled. For full consideration, candidates should provide a resume, letter of application that addresses the responsibilities and requirements described in this leadership profile, and the names and contact information of five references. References will not be contacted without prior knowledge and approval of candidates. These materials should be sent electronically via e-mail to the AYA’s consultants Dennis M. Barden and Mercedes C. Vance at AYAED@wittkieffer.com. Documents that must be mailed may be sent to Witt/Kieffer, 2015 Spring Road, Suite 510, Oak Brook, IL 60523. The consultants can be reached by telephone at (630) 575-6152.

Yale University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. Yale values diversity in its faculty, staff, and students and strongly encourages applications from women and members of underrepresented minority groups.

The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. This material has been copied, compiled, or quoted in part from Association of Yale Alumni and Yale University documents and personal interviews and is believed to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and factual situations govern.
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