

JERA OLIVER, JD, MPA

250 N. 21ST STREET, COLUMBUS, OH, 43203 | (614) 477-3511 | JERA.OLIVER@GMAIL.COM | [LINKEDIN PROFILE](#)

Outline

Experiences	1
Fundraising & Stakeholder Engagement	1
Grassroots Organizing Around Food Justice	3
Faith-Based Leadership	3
Education	4
Recent Professional Development	4

Experiences

Fundraising & Stakeholder Engagement

Antioch College, Yellow Springs, OH

June 2024 – Present

Director of Major Gifts

Devising and implementing a sustainable College-wide strategy for the identification and cultivation of major gift prospects (individuals, families, private foundations, and corporations) in collaboration with colleagues in the President's Cabinet, the Office of Advancement, Alumni Relations, and Learning Hubs, which include Antioch Farm and the Coretta Scott King Center for Cultural and Intellectual Freedom. Amplifying storytelling and impact sharing that persuades that naturally attracts deepened philanthropic engagement while simultaneously striving to broaden (and create new) pathways for stakeholder participation.

- Secured \$90,000 as of December 2024, including three five-figure gifts from individuals who had never donated to the College at that level before.
- Cultivating documentation of \$331,000 in verbal commitments, and also cultivating a pipeline of pending and planned asks that totals to over \$1.8 million.
- Synthesized the College's needs, goals, and outcomes into a set of donor-facing Philanthropic Priorities.
- Developed and began implementing an 18-month Advancement-Communications calendar.
 - o Planned and hosted three alumni salons (two in San Francisco and one in Philadelphia), which included traveling with and staffing the President of Antioch College during one of the trips.
 - o Devised a six-month strategy running from January 2025 - June 2025 that involves hosting salons and holding 1:1 meetings in six states in alignment with the launch of a comprehensive \$17.5 million Advancement campaign.
- Outlined a tiered institutional sponsorship strategy for organizations to support the Coretta Scott King Center.
- Leveraged contacts in the agricultural sector to secure a revenue-generating partnership between Antioch College Micro Farm and a soil science research team.

The Ohio State University Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI), Columbus, OH

July 2021 – June 2024

Senior Director of Development (February 2023 – June 2024)

Director of Development (July 2021 – January 2023)

Led the strategy, implementation, and evaluation of a development program in ODI that spans the continuum of philanthropy (i.e. time, talent, and treasure) while partnering with colleagues across Ohio State's 16 degree-granting units and six campuses to help raise funds for initiatives that uplift the University's Shared Values of "Diversity and Innovation" and "Inclusion and Equity."

The Ohio State University ODI, continued

July 2021 – June 2024

- Secured \$18.25 million (independently and collaboratively) in cash, pledges, estate gifts, and in-kind contributions for ODI and other units.
- Led the cultivation and negotiation of a transformational principal gift that the donors stated ranged in value from \$9-11 million (final documentation was pending as of departure from role).
- Identified, garnered buy-in for, and instituted core process improvements to enhance development operations.
 - Worked with fellow ODI Executive Council members to distill program-specific aspirations and funding needs into categories of shared philanthropic priorities and compelling stakeholder case statements.
 - Established and implemented a schedule for gift fund review and oversight with ODI program leaders.
 - Advocated for the expansion of ODI's Advancement-Development team – securing authorization to hire an Advancement Associate who supports proposal development, stewardship, fiscal oversight, ect.
 - Requested and secured a \$50,000 budget for ODI prospecting, cultivation, and stewardship activities.
 - Designed, launched, and sustained a low-cost-but-high-impact gap-filling external engagement initiative called the ODI Advancement Ambassadors Program involving alumni, friends, and corporate partners.
 - Liaised between the Office of Legal Affairs, University Advancement, and ODI to support communication and decision-making regarding compliance following *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*.
- Formed and sustained critical partnerships within Ohio State's complex matrix organizational structure.
 - Built a strong relationship with the Office of Corporate Relations to effectively manage 45+ conversations including ALDI, American Family Insurance, Cardinal Health, Coca-Cola, Enterprise Mobility, Ford, IGS, JM Smucker, JPMorgan Chase, Nationwide Insurance, and PNC Financial Services regarding philanthropically driven access to talent and amplified brand awareness.
 - Created the internal ODI Advancement Resource Partners Working Group to efficiently convene liaisons from a range of units within University Advancement on a bi-monthly basis, which fosters collaboration.
 - Advocated for an aligned Homecoming promotional plan that fosters an enhanced alumni experience with representation from ODI, Student Life, the OSU Alumni Association, and University Libraries.

The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, Columbus, OH April 2016 – July 2021
Director of Development (October 2018 – July 2021)**Associate Director of Development** (April 2016 – September 2018)

- Secured \$7.69 million (independently and collaboratively) in cash, pledges, estate gifts, and in-kind contributions for CFAES and other units from April 01, 2016 – June 30, 2021.
- Liaised between Advancement and senior leadership in four different college units including OSU Extension.
- Co-led a complex fundraising effort for the CFAES Dr. Rattan Lal Carbon Management and Sequestration Center that resulted in the acquisition of a collective eight-figure contribution from the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research and multiple corporations for a research project spanning North and South America.
- Coached the Director of the School of Environment and Natural Resources on strategies to amplify external awareness among external stakeholders, resulting in publication of the "Director's Note" series.
- Powered through challenges stemming from COVID-19 to still: 1) Qualify, solicit, and close a \$1.75 million bequest; 2) Collaborate across units in the virtual nature of work to secure a \$500,000 beneficiary designation that had been lingering for years; and 3) Close a cash gift that grew an existing endowment to \$1 million.

The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, Columbus, OH

April 2014 – April 2016

International & Graduate Affairs Fellow (Mapped to Assistant Director; Inaugural Fellow)

- Administered academic, career development, visiting scholar, study abroad, co-curricular, and alumni programs for Master of Laws (LL.M.) students and international guests under the Assistant Dean's leadership.
- Created and implemented Moritz's first LL.M. career services and professional development training program.
- Networked with external stakeholders in law-related roles, including many alumni, to market the value-adding skill sets offered by LL.M. graduates, source internships, and promote engagement opportunities.
- Designed and executed the first American Law & Language Summer Program (current design), which required benchmarking research, collaboration with faculty, and coordination with the Office of International Affairs.

Earlier Positions & Organizations

- Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio, Cincinnati, OH, **Director of Annual Giving**, Feb. 2013 – April 2014
- Neighborhood Houses (Unleashing Potential), St. Louis, MO, **Development Specialist**, Dec. 2011 – Feb. 2013
- Lift for Life Gym & Academy, St. Louis, MO, **Development Manager**, Jan. 2011 – Dec. 2011

Grassroots Organizing Around Food Justice

Growing & Growth Collective, Columbus, OH

June 2020 – Present

Co-Founder; Volunteer Leader for Administration & Strategic Alignment

- Promoting urban agriculture as a means of social action in BIPOC neighborhoods (namely the Near East Side).
- Facilitating culturally relevant, evidence-based programming on agricultural education, food access and affordability, comprehensive health and wellness, and equitable community development in six greenspaces, including four city-owned land bank properties.
- Secured Partners Achieving Community Transformation (PACT) as GGC's fiscal agent – enabling the acquisition and management of grants and sponsorships.
- Leveraged fund development expertise to help spearhead the acquisition of over \$100,000 for operations.
- Manage budget tracking in collaboration with PACT.
- Either led or meaningfully contributed to the follow projects:
 - o Design of curricula for and implementation of 4-H SPIN Clubs for youth in grades 3-8 with oversight from OSU Franklin County Extension;
 - o Installation of a new garden at the King Arts Complex;
 - o Implementation of a "Foods for Health" program in the Hildreth plot in partnership with The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center's James Mobile Education Kitchen team;
 - o Creation of a "Pick What You Need" space in the Greenway Community Garden;
 - o Expansion of the Broad Street Presbyterian Church garden to create space for commercial growing; and
 - o Piloting of a closed-loop food system called We Grow: NES under the leadership of PACT and with funding from Osteopathic Heritage Foundations.
- Expanded the operational and leadership structure of GGC to include a paid part-time administrator and collaborating with long-time institutional supporters/funders to expand personnel support even further in order to establish a strong foundation for leadership succession.
- Designing and coordinating a five-year anniversary celebration that is slated for May 2025 in partnership with co-leaders to celebrate the accomplishments in GGC since its founding.

Faith-Based Leadership

St. Philip Evangelical Lutheran Church, Columbus, OH

August 2014 – Present

Church Council

- **Chair, 80th Anniversary Committee**, January 2024 – August 2024
 - o Designed the year-long celebration and delegated tasks across multiple sub-committees to execute monthly Temple Talks, a four-day calendar of community events in August 2024, and a commemorative program book all uplifting the theme of *Creative Faith*.
 - o Exceed the gross fundraising goal of \$20,000 by 14 % and netted nearly \$9,000.
- **Co-Chair, Outreach, Health, Education, and Justice Committee, Church Council**, January 2022 – Present
 - o Secured a three-year grant totaling over \$28,000 from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America to support St. Philip's Hunger Relief Ministry, which includes sponsorship of the Growing and Growth Collective and supports the nutrition needs of East High School's student-athletes.
 - o Maintain a two-way line of communication between food justice organizations serving the Near East Side and the congregation, promoting service opportunities and policy advocacy updates.
- **Treasurer**, August 2014 – December 2019
 - o Drafted, implemented, and reviewed operating budgets of \$150,000+, and monitored investments.
 - o Refined core financial controls, including separation of duties and accounts payable procedures.
 - o Executed bi-weekly payroll for three W-2 employees and several 1099 contractors.
 - o Completed annual tax filings and Bureau of Workers Compensation reports.
 - o Designed the framework for a change management task force at the onset of a pastoral vacancy.

Education

The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH

Doctor of Philosophy (In progress part-time, expected May 2029)
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
Department of Agricultural Communication, Education, and Leadership
Field of Study: Community Leadership

The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH

Graduate Non-Degree Study
ESHESA 7850 - *Critical Race Theory in Higher Education* (Spring 2022) in the College of Education and Human Ecology

Washington University
St. Louis, MO

Juris Doctor
Honors: Equal Justice Works Award in recognition of outstanding commitment to pro bono and public service
Activities: Education Law & Policy Society (Co-Founder); Women's Law Caucus; Black Law Students Association

Kent State University
Kent, OH

Master of Public Administration
Awarded jointly with Bachelor of Arts (see below)
Concentration: Public Policy
Activities: Graduate Student Senator, Department of Political Science

Kent State University
Kent, OH

Bachelor of Arts
Awarded jointly with Master of Public Administration (see above)
Majors: Economics & Political Science
Honors: Phi Beta Kappa, *summa cum laude*, Distinction in Political Science
Thesis Advisor: Ohio Senator Vernon Sykes, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science

Additional Education

Summer Study Abroad via Georgia State University College of Law
American Economic Association Summer Program at Duke University

Recent Professional Development

The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH

Plus Delta Partners "Discipline of Frontline Fundraising" Program
Plus Delta is a 1:1 coaching and group workshop series for skill growth in strategic philanthropy/major gifts fundraising.

African American Leadership Academy
2022 Cohort, Class XVIII (18)
Columbus, OH

The ***African American Leadership Academy (AALA)*** is a leadership development program that included 10 months of self-efficacy training and executive coaching, both by Korn Ferry.