



EXECUTIVE BRIEF  
**Vice President,  
Advancement**





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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

KCI (Ketchum Canada Inc.) has been retained to conduct this search on behalf of Arts Commons. For more information about this opportunity, please contact Jill Anderson, Senior Consultant or Ellie Rusonik, Senior Vice President / Practice Lead, Search + Talent at [artscommons@kcitalent.com](mailto:artscommons@kcitalent.com).

All inquiries and applications will be held in strict confidence. To apply, please send a resume and letter of interest to the email address above and note that the deadline for submission is **March 17, 2025**.

As part of Arts Commons' commitment to Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IDEA), we work to remove barriers in collaboration with a broad range of voices. Removing these barriers begins with the hiring process. To that end, we are committed to recruiting, hiring, training, and promoting qualified people of all backgrounds, and providing accessible employment practices. Requests for accommodation can be made at any stage of the recruitment process, and applicants are asked to make their accommodation needs known to the Search Consultants.

It is the unique contributions of all our people at Arts Commons that drive our success. We are committed to providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination for everyone, and we will continue to work to ensure that our teams reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

This position is open to all Canadian citizens, permanent residents and those legally able to work in Canada. Other individuals may be considered, per immigration laws, and such candidates should include their status when applying for the position.

**Compensation:** The salary range for this position is \$150,000 - \$185,000 per annum. A comprehensive suite of benefits is also provided, including an employer RRSP match of 5% of base pay.



# Arts Commons Vice President, Advancement

## THE OPPORTUNITY

Arts Commons is seeking a strategic fundraiser and expert relationship builder as their next Vice President, Advancement. An engaged community leader with a passion for the arts, the new Vice President will lead the development team and fundraising activities for the largest performing arts centre in Western Canada, and the third largest in Canada.

Reporting to the President & CEO, and as a critical member of the Executive Leadership Team, the Vice President, Advancement will work collaboratively with colleagues across the organization, engaging and growing fundraising efforts in support of the organization's many activities and initiatives, and in parallel to the much-lauded Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) project, the largest cultural infrastructure project in Canadian history.



This is a unique opportunity to join an innovative and creative organization that is working to bring arts to the forefront of civic life in Canada's fastest-growing city. Building on the announcement of the largest known philanthropic gift to the performing arts sector in Canadian history from Dave Werklund and family, the new Vice President will directly contribute to strengthening the local arts ecosystem by building partnerships and raising funds that will support the increase of access to the highest quality of cultural experiences.

Overseeing and providing leadership to all contributed revenue-generating ventures, the Vice President, Advancement will be an experienced and resourceful fundraising professional focused on ensuring that annual, campaign, and longer-term goals are achieved. The new incumbent will be a strong coach and mentor, inspiring a high-performing team to even greater heights including four passionate and deeply committed development staff, and working closely with campaign consultants, including KCI.

The Vice President, Advancement will lead all major and principal gift activities, as well as continue to strengthen Arts Commons' relationships with government, business, and industry partners and stakeholders; all while focusing on stewardship and engagement efforts that support a growing community of donors and supporters.

This role will work from the Arts Commons office located at 205 8th Avenue SE, Calgary, Alberta and may include work on evenings and weekends, as dictated by programming and fundraising events. There is occasional travel required for this role, so a valid passport and willingness to travel is required.

## ABOUT ARTS COMMONS

Arts Commons is the artistic and civic cornerstone of Calgary's downtown core, comprised of six world-class resident companies. By championing inclusion and reconciliation and increasing the accessibility and reach of the arts in Calgary, they are reimagining the performing arts and ensuring their rightful place at the centre of civic life.



For almost 35 years, Arts Commons has been a key contributor to the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life and well-being of Calgarians and visitors. Arts Commons strives to break down barriers to cultural participation by providing an open, accessible, and inclusive gathering space in a central location.

### Belief Statement

That equitable access to the arts is a human right.

### Responsibility Statement

To redefine a bold and adventurous Calgary by championing and investing in creativity.

### Mission Statement

To be an inspirational force where artists, community, and organizations celebrate cultural identities, experience the full breadth of human emotions, and ignite positive change.

### Mandate

- To provide and care for artists and arts organizations.
- To ensure equitable access and utilization of venues.
- To foster, promote, and celebrate a vibrant arts community.

## Strategic Priorities

The organization's strategic priorities include supporting the artists and arts organizations that call Arts Commons home, including the more than 200 community groups that utilize its venues to realize their missions and to foster opportunities for collaboration across its cultural campus.

## Values

- *Do the right thing:*  
Behaving with integrity, applying professionalism, being honest, and erring on the side of grace.
- *Be our best always:*  
In service, in leadership, in professionalism, and in providing a quality experience.
- *Be open: minds, hearts, arms:*  
Through empathy, openness, trust, and collaboration, seizing opportunities to impact our community in a positive way.



## ARTS COMMONS TRANSFORMATION

The Arts Commons Transformation (ACT) is a \$660 million expansion and modernization project that will create a cultural campus in Calgary's downtown core that increases access to the arts for all, contributes to the health and emotional wellbeing of all Calgarians, represents a model for how arts organizations can be self-sustaining, is a Canadian and Global hub for the exploration of artistic innovations and partnerships, and creates a ripple effect of economic activity in Calgary's downtown and beyond. As of the date of publication, Arts Commons has exceeded 75% of its fundraising goal, with construction of the campus already underway.

ACT is part of a comprehensive investment in Calgary's downtown that will do far more than expand and modernize Calgary's premiere performing arts centre — it will revitalize the city through both the Arts Commons Transformation and the Olympic Plaza Transformation, fundamentally changing the way people perceive, experience, and talk about the arts. This endeavour will result in a vibrant, accessible, safe, and welcoming campus for all to gather, celebrate cultural identities, improve social cohesion, and enrich lives — both inside the venues and outside on the historic Olympic Plaza.



## Landmark Gift of \$75M renames Arts Commons as Werklund Centre

In June 2024, Calgarians Dave Werklund and family made the largest known philanthropic gift to the performing arts in Canadian history, reimagining Arts Commons as an arts centre that blends arts, education, social enterprise, and greater civic dialogue. With their unbridled commitment to education and community engagement, this gift marked an opportunity to reimagine a modern civic arts campus.

Arts Commons is investing the \$75 million gift towards construction costs, creating the Dave Werklund Education Wing, as well as establishing four funds to support the sustainability of the following institutional priorities: education, accessibility, operations, and an ongoing endowment to rename Arts Commons as Werklund Centre in perpetuity, starting in the 2025-26 season.

## Resident Companies

Resident companies are an integral part of the Arts Commons ecosystem, sharing the belief that the arts are a powerful contributor to the health, development, and enrichment of our community.

With the exception of Arts Commons Presents, which is the programming arm of Arts Commons, resident companies are organizations that operate independently with their own staff and boards. As stewards of the performing arts centre, Arts Commons supports these world-class companies by supplying and maintaining venues and administrative spaces, providing facility maintenance services, honoring priority booking of venues, and offering free advertising space throughout the building. As legacy institutions within the complex, resident companies also receive favourable occupancy rates. Arts Commons also has strong relationships with over 200 community and commercial partners who make regular and consistent use of venues and facilities throughout the year.

CALGARY  
PHILHARMONIC  
ORCHESTRA

 Arts  
Commons  
PRESENTS

ALBERTA  
THEATRE  
PROJECTS

ONE YELLOW RABBIT  
PERFORMANCE THEATRE

theatre:  
CALGARY

DOWNSTAGE  
THEATRE THAT CREATES  
CONVERSATION

## ADVANCEMENT AT ARTS COMMONS

Arts Commons is a not-for-profit organization and a federally registered charity that is transforming community through the power of the arts. Ticket sales, venue rentals, and other income cover 61% of the annual \$16M operating budget, leaving a \$6.1M fundraising gap. Donor support helps sustain, enrich, and grow artistic programming, support the development of local artists, and expand arts education initiatives. Learn more about [the impact of donor support](#) and explore the programs below.

- [Membership: Founders Circle](#)
- [Membership: Explorers Circle](#)
- [Corporate Sponsorship](#)
- [Special Events](#)
- [Other ways to give](#)



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **David Smith** – Board Chair
- **Patricia van de Sande** – Treasurer and Secretary
- **Heather Campbell** – Director
- **Megan Fielding** – Director
- **Corinne Grigoriu** – Director, Resident Company Representative – Calgary Phil
- **Ruhee Ismail-Teja** – Director
- **Alysha Kanji** – Director, Resident Company Representative - Downstage
- **Greg Kudar** – Director
- **Dr. Arun Lakra** – Director
- **Jim Laycraft** – Director, Resident Company Representative - One Yellow Rabbit
- **James Morton** – Director
- **Chima Nkendirim** – Director
- **Randy Pettipas** – Director
- **Margo Randles** – Director
- **J.A. Stuart Reid** – Director
- **Vishal Saini** – Director, Resident Company Representative - Alberta Theatre Projects
- **Holly Schile** – Director
- **Craig Senyk** – Director, Resident Company Representative - Theatre Calgary

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [About Arts Commons](#)
- [Organizational Culture](#)
- [Why Arts Commons](#)
- [Leadership Team](#)
- [Arts Commons Press Releases and Media Advisories](#)
- [Arts Commons 2023-24 Financial Statements](#)
- [Arts Commons Transformation Project](#)
- [2023-24 Report to the Community](#)
- [Board of Directors](#)

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES & ACCOUNTABILITIES

### Executive Management

- Serve as a member of the leadership team. Actively and collaboratively participating in key decisions pertaining to strategic initiatives, operating model, and operational execution.
- Act at all times in the best interests of Arts Commons, modelling the values of Arts Commons in all aspects of the role.

### Fundraising Management

- Serve as the principal fundraising strategist, accountable for the overall performance of all annual fundraising programs and ventures.
- Provide strategic and tactical direction for the annual operating and lifecycle campaigns (private and public sectors) by guiding volunteers and staff in a manner that advances the development of long-term donor relationships, ensures compliance with policies, and achieves the goals of Arts Commons.
- Responsible for the successful cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of major gifts. Manage and maintain a portfolio of donors, and support the President & CEO, and campaign consultants in their fundraising efforts.
- Engage and support senior volunteers, leveraging relationships for the organization.
- Act as the primary contact and relationship manager with all levels of government (politicians and bureaucrats).
- Work closely with the President & CEO, and VP & Chief Operating Officer on the development and execution of an annual budget strategy that takes into consideration ambitious fundraising goals.
- In collaboration with other Vice Presidents, identify institutional priorities that align with public and private funding streams.
- Work in partnership with the Brand and Audience Development team to ensure integrated activities that enhance Arts Commons' brand and promote a positive fundraising climate.
- Work in partnership with Resident Companies in fundraising efforts, as required.
- Adhere to the *Donor Bill of Rights* and the Association of Fundraising Professionals' *Code of Ethical Principles and Standards of Professional Practice*.

### Development Office Management and Oversight

- Oversee the development, monitoring and administration of the Development Office.
- Provide direct leadership to a current team of four; coach, mentor and inspire the team to meet individual and team goals and targets.
- Cultivate a high-performing, team-oriented work environment and culture that values staff input and builds trust through consultation and transparency.
- Recruit, train, and retain top talent to increase capacity, performance, and fundraising results.
- Oversee the development, monitoring and administration of the Development Office's plans, budgets, policies, systems and procedures.



## QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

- Minimum of 7+ years of progressive and proven leadership in senior fundraising roles.
- Successful experience soliciting and securing 6 figure gifts and above.
- Experienced relationship builder, able to develop strong connections with a variety of audiences and organizational priorities.
- Knowledge of principles and techniques relevant to fundraising and campaigns, and a successful record of stewarding relationships with sponsors and donors.
- Proven team leader with experience coaching and mentoring a high-performing fundraising team.
- Knowledge and passion for the arts, and a clear understanding of its value to the community.
- Demonstrated strong organizational skills necessary to prioritize and accomplish concurrent assignments.
- Strong work ethic and positive team attitude.
- Sound analytical abilities and good decision-making skills; ability to recognize when others need to be involved in activities or decisions.
- Curiosity and enthusiasm for meeting and working with a wide range of constituents.
- Experience with fundraising and donor management systems, such as Tessitura.

## LEADERSHIP BIOGRAPHIES

### Alex Sarian, President & Chief Executive Officer



Alex joined Arts Commons as President & CEO in May 2020, after two decades of leadership roles in New York City, most notably as a senior executive at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Prior to his time at Lincoln Center, Alex served as the Director of Education of the award-winning, off-Broadway MCC Theater, where he had the pleasure of working with a roster of acclaimed artists, including Theatre Calgary’s Artistic Director, Stafford Arima.

As a recognized authority on the civic role of arts institutions, Alex has worked on cultural projects in 15 countries spanning five continents and has taught at New York University, Pace University, and City College of New York. He has served on governing boards and special advisory committees for institutions including Tourism Calgary, the Calgary Downtown Association, SXSW, Museo de Arts Moderno de Buenos Aires, The New Group, and the Varkey Foundation’s Global Teacher Prize.

A proud member of the 2022 class of Calgary’s Top 40 Under 40, he received undergraduate and graduate degrees from New York University, is a graduate of the CommunityShift program at Western University’s Ivey School of Business and was an inaugural graduate of the Impact Program for Arts Leaders at Stanford University’s Graduate School of Business.

His bestselling book, [The Audacity of Relevance: Critical Conversations on the Future of Arts and Culture](#) (ECW Press, 2024) has been praised by Forbes as “a manifesto for the arts in times of crisis.”

## David Smith, Board Chair



David G. Smith served as Chief Executive Officer of Keyera Corp. from 2015 until his retirement in 2020 and was a senior executive with Keyera since the company's inception in 1998. Mr. Smith has more than 38 years of experience in the energy industry in Canada. He began his career with Imperial Oil Limited in 1982 and joined Gulf Canada Resources Limited in 1991.

Mr. Smith is a director of the United Way of Calgary and Area. He holds a Bachelor of Mathematics degree from the University of Waterloo, a Master of Business Administration degree from Harvard University and the ICD.D designation from the Institute of

Corporate Directors. David has served as an Arts Commons Board member since 2015 and became Chair of the Board in 2022.

## LIVING IN CALGARY

Calgary, often referred to as the "Heart of the New West," is a vibrant city located in the province of Alberta, Canada. With a population of over 1.5 million people, Calgary is the largest city in Alberta and the third-largest municipality in Canada. This bustling metropolis has a lot to offer both professionally and personally, making it an ideal destination for those looking to advance their careers and improve their quality of life.



Calgary is known for its thriving economy, which is driven by sectors such as energy, technology, agriculture, finance, and healthcare. Calgary's strong economic foundation ensures stability and growth, making it a great place to build a lasting career. When it comes to quality of life, Calgary consistently ranks high on various global indices. The city boasts a high standard of living, with excellent healthcare and education systems, low crime rates, and a clean environment. Calgary is known for its friendly and welcoming community, making it easy for newcomers to feel at home.



The city hosts events like the Calgary Stampede, known as "The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth," which attracts visitors from around the globe. From museums and galleries to theatres and concert venues, Calgary offers something for everyone to enjoy.

Calgary is home to several prestigious educational institutions, including the University of Calgary and Mount Royal University. These institutions provide outstanding educational experiences and contribute to the city's reputation as a centre for research and innovation.

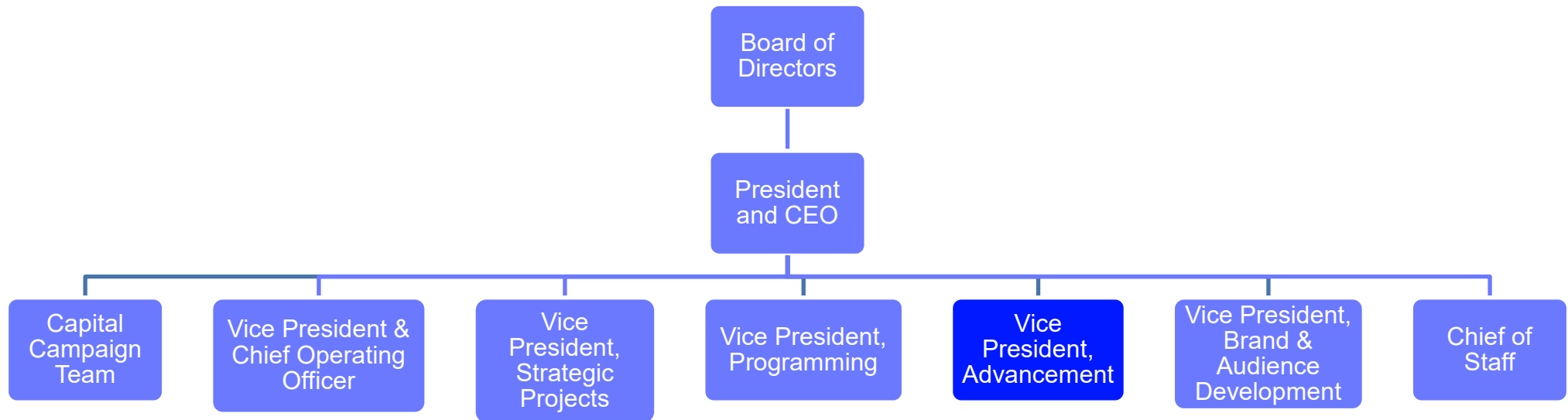
Calgary prides itself on being a diverse and inclusive city, celebrating a wide range of cultural backgrounds and fostering an environment of acceptance and mutual respect. This diversity enriches the community and provides a dynamic and vibrant atmosphere for all residents.



The city is renowned for its clean air, safe neighbourhoods, and vibrant multicultural community. With over 8,000 hectares of parks and green spaces, including the picturesque Bow River pathway system, Calgary offers countless opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. One of Calgary's most compelling features is its proximity to the stunning Canadian Rockies. With world-famous destinations like Banff and Lake Louise just a short drive away, residents can enjoy a wide range of recreational activities such as hiking, skiing, and exploring breathtaking landscapes. Within the city, you'll find numerous parks, pathways, and green spaces, perfect for outdoor enthusiasts and families alike.

Calgary is a cultural hub with a rich arts scene, lively festivals, and diverse culinary offerings.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART – EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM



## ORGANIZATIONAL CHART – ADVANCEMENT TEAM

