



ASSIST
SCHOLARS

Director of Development

*Hybrid
Suffield, CT*

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Founder + CEO

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About ASSIST Scholars

Founded in 1969, American Secondary Schools for Students and Teachers (ASSIST Scholars) is a nonprofit international exchange organization that identifies and places exceptional secondary school students from around the world in leading U.S. independent schools for one transformational year.

Each year, ASSIST:

- » Partners with 80+ independent day and boarding schools across the United States;
- » Selects and supports approximately 180-190 ASSIST Scholars from more than 50 countries, all on one-year scholarships making life-changing opportunities accessible to remarkable young people who might not otherwise be able to attend U.S. schools;
- » Enriches U.S. school communities by bringing diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and cultures into classrooms, dorms, and dining halls.

ASSIST Scholars are identified as high-achieving, motivated students and emerging leaders in their home countries. They arrive on U.S. campuses ready to engage deeply in academics, athletics, arts, and school life. Their presence expands the worldview of American classmates and faculty and creates enduring cross-cultural understanding.

After their year in the U.S., scholars go on to:

- » Earn admission to top universities in the U.S. and abroad (including institutions such as Harvard and other leading global universities);
- » Build careers in finance, law, medicine, international development, technology, public policy, the EU, and more;
- » Serve as civic and business leaders in their home countries;
- » Remain part of an alumni community of more than 6,300 members in over 50 countries.

An independent brand audit conducted recently found that ASSIST enjoys one of the highest Net Promoter Scores (NPS) the firm had ever recorded, with schools, alumni, parents, and donors praising the integrity, quality, and impact of the program.

MISSION

ASSIST creates life-changing opportunities for outstanding international Scholars to learn from and contribute to the finest American independent secondary schools.

VISION

To create a worldwide network of future leaders who are dedicated to the belief that tolerance and cross-cultural understanding are the basis for creating a more peaceful world.

The Opportunity

ASSIST is entering an exciting chapter in its long history of expanding global understanding through education. With a strong foundation, a devoted board, and an increasingly sophisticated organizational infrastructure, ASSIST is poised to elevate its philanthropic program to match the scale and potential of its mission.

The life-changing impact of an ASSIST scholarship is unmistakable. Graduates consistently describe their exchange year as the catalyst for academic success, international awareness, and professional opportunity. Paired with a global alumni network now more than 6,300 strong, its story creates a powerful platform for growth. Recent investments in branding, marketing, and student recruitment have strengthened the organization's visibility and positioned ASSIST for deeper engagement with alumni, families, foundations, and friends.

The Director of Development will step into a role with significant untapped potential. Annual fundraising stands near \$1 million, supported by a committed board and a loyal, growing community of donors. Alumni giving, though still emerging, represents an opportunity to broaden and diversify philanthropic support. The organization has also articulated an aspirational goal of growing its endowment, expanding access for talented students with financial need.

This is a role for a strategic, relationship-centered fundraiser eager to build something lasting. The Director of Development will help to shape the future of a global mission by strengthening ASSIST's ability to transform lives, foster cross-cultural leadership, and bring the world closer together.

Position Summary

ASSIST Scholars is seeking a Director of Development to serve as the organization's fundraising and advancement leader, responsible for designing, implementing, and leading a comprehensive development program that:

- » Increases annual philanthropic revenue and diversifies the donor base;
- » Deepens and broadens engagement with alumni and families around the world;
- » Strengthens board and volunteer leadership in fundraising;
- » Positions ASSIST to grow its endowment and move toward need-blind selection for scholars.

The Director of Development will report directly to the President and serve as a member of the senior leadership team, working in close partnership with the President, Board of Directors, a colleague focused on development and student orientation, and another focused on marketing and scholar recruitment. The Director of Development will also serve as staff liaison to the Board Development and Governance Committees, and support development efforts of the Board Chair, Vice Chair, and Chair of the Development Committee.

This is a highly relational, outward-facing role for a hands-on, full-stack fundraiser who is as comfortable crafting strategy and working with major donors as they are writing appeals, analyzing data, and building systems. **It is truly an opportunity to architect a global philanthropy program from the ground up.**

Essential Job Functions

Strategy + Leadership

- » Develop, implement, and continuously refine a multi-year development strategy aligned with ASSIST's strategic plan and financial goals.
- » Establish clear annual fundraising goals, metrics, and dashboards across multiple revenue streams (annual fund, major gifts, alumni giving, foundations, and special campaigns).

- » Serve as a strategic thought partner to the President and Board on all matters related to philanthropy, positioning ASSIST for long-term sustainability and impact.

Major Gifts + Individual Philanthropy

- » Build and manage a robust portfolio of major gift prospects, including board members, parents, alumni, alumni families, and friends of the organization in the U.S. and abroad.
- » Lead cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of gifts typically in the \$5,000-\$10,000+ range, with an eye toward securing more gifts in the \$30,000-\$50,000+ range and beyond.
- » Plan and execute donor visits and travel in key hubs (e.g., New York, Washington, DC, Europe), often in partnership with the President and board leaders.
- » Design and implement giving and recognition programs that inspire greater philanthropic engagement.

Annual Giving + Alumni Engagement

- » Oversee and grow the annual fund, including digital campaigns, personalized outreach, and segmented appeals to alumni, families, and friends.
- » Partner with the Development + Orientation Manager and Director of Scholar Recruitment + Marketing to drive integrated campaigns (email, social, web, and events).
- » Design and launch alumni engagement strategies that:
 - Reconnect alumni to one another and to ASSIST;
 - Highlight and celebrates alumni impact;
 - Encourage increased participation and sustained giving.

Board + Volunteer Leadership

- » Partner closely with the Chair of the Development Committee and board leadership to:
 - Set development goals and priorities;
 - Prepare materials for board and committee meetings;
 - Support board members in their roles as donors, ambassadors, and peer solicitors.
- » Provide tools, talking points, and strategic guidance that make it easier and more natural for board members to open doors and make asks.

Institutional + International Philanthropy

- » Identify, research, and cultivate foundation and corporate prospects whose priorities align with ASSIST's mission (e.g., global education, leadership development, international exchange).
- » Collaborate with partners such as Friends of ASSIST (Germany) and international alumni leaders to strengthen philanthropic pathways outside the U.S.
- » Ensure that donor intent, legal requirements, and cross-border giving mechanisms are understood and honored.

Operations, Systems + Stewardship

- » Oversee the effective use of ASSIST's CRM (DonorPerfect) and other systems, ensuring data quality, useful reporting, and efficient workflows.
- » Partner with the Development + Orientation Manager to:
 - Produce timely acknowledgments, impact reports, and stewardship communications;
 - Support board meeting logistics and materials as needed.
 - Create donor-facing storytelling, case materials, and impact communications that bring ASSIST's mission and results to life.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will bring eight or more years of progressive development experience, including a track record of success in individual major gifts, annual giving, donor cultivation, and stewardship. They will also have:

- » Bachelor's degree or equivalent (required).
- » Experience working in international settings, or in mission-driven organizations with globally distributed stakeholders.
- » Demonstrated success building or significantly enhancing a development program in a lean environment.
- » Experience working closely with executive leadership and engaged boards, including supporting volunteer leaders in prospect identification and solicitation.
- » Familiarity with U.S. philanthropic culture and comfort working across different giving cultures and norms (e.g., European and others).
- » Strong storytelling and communication skills, with the ability to translate a complex mission into clear, compelling cases for support.
- » Proficiency with development databases/CRMs and data-informed decision-making; experience with DonorPerfect is a plus but not required.
- » Willingness and ability to travel extensively throughout the U.S. and internationally throughout the year (e.g., orientation program in Europe, alumni and donor visits, school visits, etc.).

Leadership + Key Colleagues (Please do not contact the organization or its leaders directly)

Martin Milne *(hiring manager)* **President**

Martin Milne joined ASSIST in 2009 as the Director of School and Family Relations, was promoted to Vice President in 2016, and was named the fourth President of ASSIST in November 2020. Martin grew up at Deerfield Academy as the son of two teachers, and after graduating from college he held positions in domestic and international independent schools as a history teacher, coach, and administrator for 12 years.

Martin has lived in the United Kingdom, Kenya, and Switzerland and is a graduate of Eaglebrook School, Deerfield Academy, St. Lawrence University, and the State University of New York at Albany.

Pam Haering Freer **Chair, Board of Directors**

Pam's background as an ASSIST host parent, a global marketing executive and education consultant makes her a uniquely qualified member of the ASSIST Board.

After graduating from Dartmouth College with a degree in Government and Policy Studies, Pam began her career in advertising, working on global consumer brands before becoming V.P. of International Ad Sales Marketing for Time Warner-Turner (TWT) in New York. While there, she managed marketing teams in Europe, Asia, New York, and Latin America. Following her success at TWT, Pam was asked to

join the Viacom Corporation as the SVP of Viacom Plus, where she built and co-led a division that developed integrated marketing solutions for Viacom's top global clients.

Her lifelong passion for educational equity and access led her to consult on the launch of an innovative, diverse, independent school in L.A., and serve on numerous nonprofit education boards.

In 2020, Pam was selected to be a Senior Fellow in Harvard's Advanced Leadership Initiative Program and is currently completing her master's degree in education leadership and Entrepreneurship at Harvard's Graduate School of Education. Pam currently lives with her husband, Randy, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and enjoys every moment she gets with her college-age twin daughters.

Helis Zulijani-Boye **Vice Chair, Board of Directors**

A former ASSIST Scholar from Croatia (Cranbrook School, '00), Helis is a valued member of the ASSIST Board. Her experience in the financial field and awareness of international educational issues make her the perfect addition to ASSIST's Development and Alumni Relations and Campaign Steering Committees. Helis graduated from Harvard University with a B.A. in Economics in 2005. She then went to work for JP Morgan, the Carlyle Group, and the Charterhouse Group, where she built a strong resume of experience in the financial sector. She is currently Principal at Soros Fund Management.

Helis speaks four languages, loves to travel, and is passionate about giving more students the opportunity to experience international education. She currently lives in New York City with her husband, Andreas, and their young twin daughters.

Andrew Pilaro **Development Committee Chair, Board of Directors**

Andrew graduated from Suffield Academy in 1988, an ASSIST member school since the inception of the program. He went on to the University of Virginia, graduating with a bachelor's degree, and next received his MBA from Columbia University.

Andrew holds the position of President at CAP Properties Limited, a family-owned and run investment company. CAP invests in a multitude of strategies, including hedge funds, direct investments, and private equity.

Andrew sits on the boards of PAID Inc., Southampton Youth Services (SYS), Southampton Cultural Center (SCC). He is a graduate of the University of Virginia and holds a MBA from Columbia University in New York.

Reporting Relationships

The Director of Development reports directly to the President and supervises the Development + Orientation Manager.

Location

ASSIST is based in Suffield, CT, and staff typically work onsite approximately two days per week. Given the nature of development and the expected frequency of travel regionally, nationally, and abroad, the successful candidate must be willing to travel into the office on a regular basis as necessary.

Compensation + Benefits

The salary for this position is approximately \$130,000-\$150,000. ASSIST offers a generous benefits package that includes:

- » Medical Insurance (eligible on the first of the month following 60 days of employment). ASSIST currently pays 85% of the premium and deductible costs for coverage of eligible employees and 70% for their spouse and dependents.
- » Voluntary Dental and Vision Insurance.
- » Group Life Insurance (after 90 days of continuous employment).
- » Long-Term Disability Insurance (after 90 days of continuous employment).
- » Pension Plan with employer contribution of 8% of base salary for employees who work more than 1,000 hours per year and are over the age of 21. Plan requires employee contribution of at least 2%.
- » Vacation: Four weeks of annual vacation (a schedule week at thanksgiving and Christmas, and two other flexible weeks approved in advance by the President).
- » Twelve Observed Holidays.

As a reflection of our firm's commitment to equity and equal pay for all, Cooper Coleman requires that salary ranges or salary starting points be published for every search we conduct. The practice of not posting salaries perpetuates the gender and racial wage gap and discriminates against women, people of color, and other historically excluded populations by causing individuals to negotiate from a disadvantaged starting point.

Submission Instructions *(read carefully)*

[Cooper Coleman](#) is leading this search on behalf of ASSIST. To apply, please [visit this link](#) (www.coopercoleman.com/current-searches). **ALL expressions of interest should be made through the online application.** Please send nominations of qualified candidates directly to **Kiratiana Freelon** at kiratiana.freelon@coopercoleman.com. Kindly use the position title as the subject line of your email. All inquiries will be held in confidence.

A cover letter is not required with your initial application but is welcomed to help us understand your fitness for and interest in this role during our initial evaluation. Candidates invited for interviews will be asked to provide a thoughtful letter of interest indicating their specific qualifications for the opportunity, desire to join ASSIST, and connection to its mission.

Cooper Coleman LLC is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all qualified candidates and will refer candidates without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or identity, age, ability, veteran status, or any other legally protected basis.

Background Checks + Credentials Verification

Before sending your resume for this position, please read it over for accuracy. Cooper Coleman verifies its candidates' employment and academic credentials at the time of offer, and our clients frequently conduct background checks before finalizing an offer.

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About Cooper Coleman

Cooper Coleman is a full-service recruiting firm partnering exclusively with nonprofit organizations, foundations, and research and academic institutions to drive meaningful growth. We move organizations *forward* by placing the right leaders in the right roles at the right time, and we help to strengthen management and fundraising capacity to amplify their mission and impact.

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