

JOHN A. FERGUSON

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(317) 989-8483

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A GLIMPSE INTO JOHN A. FERGUSON

There are few things in this world more powerful than sharing lessons learned. When we allow ourselves to be vulnerable and embrace our personal growth, then share that growth, we can inspire others to undertake their own learning journeys. And the more people who do this work and share their experiences, the more ripples are created in our societal pond, and on and on it goes. Sharing what we learn from authentically connecting with ourselves through the active pursuit of knowledge is paramount to creating the space and opportunity for our society, and for us as individuals, to evolve.

2012

Returned to academia to pursue a degree in philanthropic studies at Indiana University, leaving behind a successful career in hospitality.

2016

Named Chancellor's Scholar for the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

2018

First-ever BA to serve on the Alumni Board of Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

2021

Seeking position with an innovative and forward-focused entity

2014

Selected as a Sam Masarachia Scholar, a full-tuition scholarship program focused on activism and social movements

2016

Graduated with high distinction from Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

2020

Selected by The Patterson Foundation to become a TPF Fellow through an intensely engaging and highly competitive application and interview process

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EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

2020

The Harwood Institute—
Certified Public
Innovator

2019

Cornell University
(eCornell)—Professional
Certificate in Project
Management

2018

LUMA Institute—
Fundamentals of
Innovation Intensive
Workshop

2018

The Fund Raising School
—Certificate in Fund
Raising Management

2016

Indiana University O’Neill
School of Public and
Environmental Affairs—
Professional Certificate in
Nonprofit Management

2016

Indiana University Lilly
Family School of
Philanthropy—B.A.
Philanthropic Studies

EXPERIENCE

2020/21 Fellow, Initiative Manager—Digital Access for All The Patterson Foundation, Sarasota, FL April 2020–Present

Contributed to multiple projects and strategic initiatives across a wide variety of focus areas, including digital inclusion, nonprofit thriving, research and evaluation, public innovation, and community engagement. Reports to and works closely with the President/CEO of a \$230M private foundation dedicated to innovation and thought leadership.

Digital Access for All (DA4A)

- Co-led the strategic direction for TPF’s new initiative centered around understanding and exploring digital inclusion within Florida’s Suncoast region and set the table for strategic collaboration with other funders, nonprofits, government entities, individuals, and the media
- Manage two direct reports and ensure excellence is delivered
- Manage overall initiative and work closely with initiative lead to develop and evolve strategies for sustained success
- Lead discussions aimed to discover shared aspirations across a wide range of sectors and focus areas and facilitated knowledge sharing and collaboration
- Invited to participate as a commentator, presenter, or panelist for multiple webinars, including the nationwide Campaign for Grade-Level Reading’s digital equity series installment on the federal role in addressing the digital divide.
- Contribute to and oversee the Digital Access for All monthly newsletter which has an average open rate of more than 40%

Project Management

- Develop detailed frameworks containing purpose, vision, roles, timelines, etc. for multiple initiatives and projects
- Coordinate collaboration between multiple partners and stakeholders
- Lead people, processes, and timelines effectively

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COMMUNITY SERVICE

2018–Present

Indiana University Lilly
Family School of
Philanthropy Alumni Board
Member
– Incoming Chair

2004–2012

Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia
Fraternity of America, Inc.
– Chairman, Collegiate
Province Representatives
Council
– NEC Representative,
Commission on Standards:
Represented the views of
the NEC in deliberations
regarding ethical or legal
matters

OTHER AWARDS & HONORS

2015 + 2016

Indiana University Lilly
Family School of
Philanthropy — Top 100

2015

Selected by the National
Gay & Lesbian Taskforce
to present on creating
culturally humble
environments within
higher education at the
national Creating
Change Conference

EXPERIENCE

Engagement Manager | Outreach Manager
Indiana United Ways (IUW), Indianapolis, IN
May 2017–March 2020

Engagement Manager

- Collaborated with executives, staff, and partners from multiple United Ways throughout the Indiana network to develop and execute strategies and programs that delivered high-value community impact
- Developed, adapted, or created custom engagement products in partnership with local United Ways (LUWs) and their corporate/community partners
- Served on the Donor-Centered Development Workgroup, working closely LUW fundraisers to draft fund development plans and strategies for prospecting, cultivation, and donor relations
- Managed team of four who analyzed data to inform IUW's Vision 2027 Strategic Plan
- Led internal workgroups utilizing the principles and techniques of Human-Centered Design
- Co-designed and delivered regional board trainings that satisfied the IN18 grant requirements for LUWs
- Developed new and strengthened existing partnerships with other philanthropic, academic, and corporate institutions

Outreach Manager

- Executed or supervised all administrative and logistical aspects of public workshops and partnerships
- Ran day-to-day operations for IUW's AmeriCorps project—United Against Opioid Abuse—including recruitment, selection, and supervision of AmeriCorps members and collaborations with partners throughout the state to ensure compliance, measured results, and meaningful experiences
- Developed, adapted, and managed multiple internal systems and processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness

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OTHER AWARDS & HONORS

2014
Tau Sigma National
Honor Society

2013
National Society of
Leadership and Success

Dean's List, every
semester at Indiana
University Lilly Family
School of Philanthropy

ATTRIBUTES OF EXCELLENCE

Network Weaver

- Natural relationship builder
- Nurturing mentor and eager mentee
- Create brave spaces to exercise vulnerability, share lived experiences, and build trust

Engaging Storyteller

- Able to combine practical and research-based examples to create a compelling narrative
- Adaptive writing style
- Passionate and enthusiastic presenter
- Comfortable and confident public speaker

Fierce Advocate

- Firm belief in the unique value and vast potential of every individual
- Stands for equity in all endeavors
- Amplifies voices through writing and personal testimony
- Academic and experiential background in advocacy and activism
- Committed volunteer with a helper mentality

Discerning for Possibilities

- Comfortable with ambiguity
- Listens deeply for possible synergies and connections between people, organizations, communities, and/or ideas
- Evolutionary and iterative mindset—quick to adapt
- Able to peel away layers to get to the root cause

Small Things, Big Things, All Things

- Grounded in and inspired by the old theater axiom, *"It's always someone's first time, so you owe them your very best."*
- Live the day—thoughtful and comprehensive planner for events (virtual or in-person), including frameworks, run-of-shows and strategic alignment of messaging and communications
- Continually striving for excellence while learning from moments that fall short