

Leighton Wilson



M.S. in Fundraising and Grantmaking Alumnus, Class of 2011

After working for a congressional campaign in Louisiana and serving as a legislative director in Austin, Texas, Leighton Wilson decided he wanted to transfer his fundraising skills into a career in the nonprofit sector. "Graduate school was the logical next step to making that transition," he explains, noting that the perfect program for achieving his goal was the NYU School of Professional Studies George H. Heyman, Jr. Center's [M.S. in Fundraising and Grantmaking](#).

Wilson confesses that [living and studying in New York City](#) was a major factor in his initial choice of the NYU School of Professional Studies; however, it was the classroom experience that would assure him he had made the right decision. "My professors were amazing, they had high-level connections in most every type of nonprofit organization you can think of," says Wilson, explaining that because [faculty members](#) are active practitioners in the nonprofit world, their experience and their expansive networks are unparalleled resources. Also important to Wilson was the continuous dialog he had with classmates who hailed from a diverse range of professions and international backgrounds. "I met students from Uganda, Peru, France, Germany, and Japan," he notes. "It was the exact type of interactive

experience in which I hoped I would be immersed."

"The NYU School of Professional Studies program really dove deep into the world of philanthropy; the management of nonprofits and NGOs; as well as the techniques used for cultivating donors," says Wilson, who acknowledges that it was the practical skills and connections he acquired at the School that helped him win the position of executive director of The Adera Foundation, a nonprofit that works to improve the lives of the people of Ethiopia. He also has secured a director-level fundraising position at the American Heart Association. "I feel confident doing the job of a major gifts officer, meeting with donors, soliciting gifts, and applying for government grants because of the level of education and the hands-on experience I acquired at the NYU School of Professional Studies."




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