



University of Houston
Senior Associate Athletic Director, Executive Director of Cougar Pride

About the University of Houston and Athletics

The University of Houston (UH) is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research institution located in the nation's fourth-largest city. Founded in 1927, UH serves a diverse student population of more than 48,000 students and is nationally recognized for academic excellence, innovation, and community impact. The university is deeply committed to student success, research advancement, and engagement with the Greater Houston region and beyond.

University of Houston Athletics competes at the NCAA Division I level as a member of the Big 12 Conference and sponsors 17 varsity sports programs. UH Athletics is driven by a vision to compete for championships while delivering an exceptional student-athlete experience and elevating the Houston Cougars brand nationally. As intercollegiate athletics enters a new era of revenue generation, brand monetization, and student-athlete empowerment, UH Athletics seeks bold, innovative leadership to advance its external and brand strategy.

About the Position

Reporting to the Executive Senior Associate AD/Chief Revenue Officer, serving as a member of the Department senior management team. This position is responsible for the oversight and management of fundraising activities for the Department which include principal gifts, major gifts, annual giving, premium seating, and sport-specific giving. This position will closely collaborate with other Athletics unit leaders to ensure synergy of communications and operations leading to maximum fundraising results.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Philanthropic Strategy & Revenue Leadership

- Serve as the chief fundraising strategist and revenue leader for Cougar Pride, the University of Houston Athletics annual and leadership giving program.
- Develop and execute a comprehensive, multi-year philanthropic strategy to grow annual giving, leadership gifts, and donor participation in support of UH Athletics priorities.
- Establish and achieve ambitious annual revenue, participation, and retention goals aligned with departmental and institutional objectives.
- Lead fundraising strategy for priority initiatives including scholarships, programmatic enhancements, NIL-supportive initiatives (as permissible), and special projects as defined by the Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics.
- Annually develop and execute the Athletics fundraising business plan in alignment with departmental priorities and institutional objectives.

Frontline Fundraising & Donor Engagement

- Personally manage a portfolio of high-capacity Cougar Pride donors and prospects, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding leadership-level annual gifts and multi-year commitments.
- Manage a portfolio of approximately fifty (50) prospects with the capacity to make gifts of \$100,000 or more.
- Plan and execute approximately 15–20 individual meetings annually with prospects, donors, and volunteers.
- Design and execute targeted engagement strategies that move donors along the giving continuum from entry-level support to major gift readiness.
- Oversee personal gift solicitations, including strategy development, preparation of solicitation and briefing materials, and coordination of leadership involvement in donor meetings.
- Collaborate with the Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics, head coaches, and senior staff to support donor cultivation and solicitation efforts.

- Collaborate with head coaches and staff to understand and achieve sport-specific fundraising goals.
- Represent UH Athletics at games, events, and donor engagement activities, building authentic relationships with alumni, parents, and friends of the program.

Program Leadership & Operations

- Provide strategic leadership and operational oversight of all Cougar Pride functions, including annual giving campaigns, donor communications, benefits, stewardship, events, and engagement programming.
- Develop and manage the Cougar Pride budget, ensuring effective allocation of resources and strong return on investment.
- Establish clear performance metrics, dashboards, and reporting processes to track progress and inform decision-making.
- Lead and mentor Cougar Pride staff, fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, and donor-centered service.

Advancement Partnership & Institutional Alignment

- Serve as the primary liaison between UH Athletics and University Advancement, ensuring alignment of messaging, strategy, and donor engagement efforts.
- Meet regularly with the Vice President for Advancement (monthly) and advancement colleagues to coordinate strategy, share insights, and align donor pipelines.
- Collaborate with central advancement on data, prospect management, stewardship, and campaign alignment while maintaining Athletics-led ownership of Cougar Pride strategy.
- Ensure donor strategies are coordinated across campus to maximize lifetime donor value and institutional impact.

Collaboration with Brand, Marketing & Fan Experience

- Partner closely with the Chief Revenue Officer, Chief Branding Officer, and external teams to align donor engagement, communications, and benefits with the broader UH Athletics brand and fan experience strategy.
- Leverage content, storytelling, digital platforms, and gameday experiences to deepen donor connection and enhance Cougar Pride value proposition.
- Identify new engagement and revenue opportunities that connect philanthropy to fan experience and brand loyalty.

Governance, Compliance & Professional Standards

- Ensure all fundraising and donor engagement activities comply with NCAA, Big 12 Conference, University of Houston, and applicable state and federal regulations.
- Uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct, donor stewardship, and confidentiality.
- Participate in rules education and compliance initiatives as required.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree, MBA, or advanced degree preferred.
- Minimum of 7–10 years of progressively responsible professional fundraising experience, preferably in intercollegiate athletics, higher education advancement, or a related nonprofit environment, including leadership roles; Experience working in a Power 4 or Autonomy-level athletics department preferred.
- Demonstrated success leading annual giving, donor engagement, leadership giving, and major gift programs, with measurable revenue growth and achievement of ambitious fundraising goals.
- Proven experience managing donor portfolios, cultivating and stewarding relationships, and closing leadership-level, major, and principal gifts.
- Strong understanding of intercollegiate athletics culture, NCAA Division I operations, donor motivations, and the role of philanthropy in competitive success.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and execute comprehensive advancement strategies aligned with departmental and institutional priorities.

- Demonstrated success partnering with central advancement offices while maintaining unit-level fundraising leadership and accountability.
- Proven ability to lead, organize, and manage teams, including hiring, mentoring, motivating, and holding staff accountable for performance.
- Experience managing budgets and building scalable fundraising operations with clear metrics and accountability.
- Highly organized with strong strategic thinking, analytical, problem-solving, and project management skills, and the ability to manage multiple priorities with discretion and sound judgment.
- Excellent interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills, with the ability to engage effectively with senior leaders, donors, coaches, and institutional stakeholders.
- Ability to thrive in a fast-paced, performance-driven, and evolving environment and lead change with confidence and clarity.
- Familiarity with advancement CRMs and data-driven fundraising strategies

Application Process

The University of Houston invites letters of nomination, applications or expressions of interest to be submitted to the search firm assisting the University. Confidential review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made. For full consideration, application materials should be submitted at Parker Executive Search's [website](#). For additional information, please contact:

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