



University of Colorado Boulder Deputy Athletic Director for Philanthropy & Strategic Initiatives

About the CU Boulder

The University of Colorado Boulder is Colorado's leading public research university, transforming lives since 1876. As the state's flagship institution and a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), CU Boulder is internationally recognized for excellence in research, teaching, and public service. CU Boulder is home to five Nobel Laureates and is the only university to send space instruments to every planet in the solar system. The university aligns its efforts to advance research and creative excellence, global sustainability impact, and the success of all students, faculty, and staff.

CU Athletics plays a vital role in advancing the university's mission, spirit, and national profile. Through competitive excellence, the student-athlete experience, and meaningful community engagement, CU Athletics serves as a front porch to the institution and a powerful platform for philanthropic investment.

Position Overview

The Deputy Athletic Director for Philanthropy & Strategic Initiatives serves as the senior executive leader for all philanthropic strategy, fundraising operations, and donor engagement for CU Athletics and the Buff Club. This position provides vision, leadership, and execution for a comprehensive athletics fundraising program that drives transformational private support, strengthens alignment between CU Athletics and CU Boulder Advancement, and advances institutional priorities.

As CU Boulder launches its first-ever campus-based comprehensive campaign, this role will play a central leadership role in shaping athletics' campaign priorities and philanthropic strategy.

The position will lead a modern, integrated fundraising enterprise focused on major gifts, principal gifts, annual giving, premium seating philanthropy, donor stewardship, and engagement experiences. The Deputy AD will personally cultivate and solicit the department's largest and most complex gifts while building and managing a high-performing development team.

This role carries a dual reporting relationship to the Director of Athletics and the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and serves as a key member of the Athletics Executive Leadership Team and a senior leader within CU Boulder Advancement. In addition, the role may include, at the discretion of the Director of Athletics, sport oversight responsibilities that provide broader departmental leadership exposure and meaningful professional development.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Deputy Athletic Director for Philanthropy & Strategic Initiatives will perform executive-level functions, including (but not limited to) the following:

Executive Leadership & Strategy

- Serve as the chief architect of CU Athletics' comprehensive philanthropy and strategic initiatives program.
- Establish and execute a multi-year fundraising vision aligned with Athletics strategic priorities and campus-wide advancement goals.
- Partner closely with the Director of Athletics, Vice Chancellor for Advancement, and senior campus leaders to identify, prioritize, and advance transformational funding opportunities.

- Provide strategic counsel to Athletics leadership on philanthropic trends, campaign planning, donor strategy, and revenue diversification.
- Ensure strong integration and alignment between Athletics Development and Advancement donor and prospective donor systems, policies, and best practices.

Principal & Major Gift Fundraising

- Serve as a frontline principal gift officer, personally managing a national portfolio of high-capacity donors and prospective donors.
- Lead all stages of the donor lifecycle: discovery, qualification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship.
- Secure multiple seven- and eight-figure gifts over time and consistently close significant six and seven-figure commitments annually.
- Partner with the Director of Athletics, head coaches, senior administrators, and campus and system leaders in high-level donor cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship.
- Develop compelling philanthropic investment opportunities tied to facilities, endowments, scholarships, program excellence, NIL-supportive initiatives, the Crawford Family WHOLE Student-Athlete model, and the overall student-athlete experience.

Buff Club & Annual Giving Leadership

- Provide executive oversight of the Buff Club and all annual giving programs supporting CU Athletics.
- Provide strategic leadership for premium seating and hospitality programs at Folsom Field and the CU Events Center, driving philanthropy, annual revenue growth, pricing strategy, inventory optimization, and exceptional donor experiences.
- Drive growth in membership, participation, retention, and annual revenue.
- Develop modern donor acquisition and engagement strategies, including digital fundraising, events, affinity-based programs, and the appropriate use of AI-enabled tools.
- Ensure donor experiences are personalized, impactful, and aligned with CU brand standards.

Team Leadership & Talent Development

- Recruit, develop, mentor, and retain a high-performing Athletics Development team.
- Establish clear performance expectations, metrics, and accountability structures.
- Foster a collaborative, results-driven culture grounded in professionalism, innovation, and service.
- Promote ongoing professional development and best-practice fundraising methodologies.

Donor Engagement & Experience

- Design and oversee a comprehensive donor engagement strategy including game-day experiences, stewardship events, regional programming, and special cultivation opportunities.
- Work closely with Athletics Communications, Marketing, Creative, and Advancement/Campus MarCom teams to tell compelling impact stories.
- Ensure consistent stewardship and impact reporting for major and principal donors.

Data, Analytics & Operations

- Leverage data and analytics to drive prospect strategy, portfolio management, and performance optimization.
- Establish and monitor key fundraising metrics and dashboards.
- Ensure disciplined use of the Advancement CRM (Salesforce) and Athletics databases, including Paciolan.
- Oversee budget development, forecasting, and financial management for Athletics Development operations, in partnership with the Director of Athletics and Vice Chancellor for Advancement.

Campaign & Strategic Initiative Leadership

- Play a leadership role in university-wide comprehensive campaigns as they relate to Athletics priorities.
- Identify and lead special strategic initiatives that advance long-term growth, revenue generation, and institutional impact.
- Support feasibility studies, business planning, and philanthropic market assessments.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree strongly preferred.
- Significant senior-level experience in fundraising, philanthropy, or advancement, preferably within intercollegiate athletics or higher education.
- Demonstrated success personally securing major, principal, and transformational gifts.
- Proven ability to lead, build, and manage high-performing teams.
- Exceptional interpersonal, communication, and relationship-building skills.
- Strong strategic, analytical, and financial acumen.
- Knowledge of intercollegiate athletics, NIL environment, and evolving collegiate landscape.
- Demonstrated commitment to ethics, integrity, and compliance.
- Ability to work evenings, weekends, and travel as required.

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience working within a Power Conference or comparable Division I environment.
- Experience with comprehensive campaigns.
- Familiarity with advancement CRMs.
- Track record of building integrated fundraising strategies across multiple constituencies.

Why CU Boulder

This role offers a rare opportunity to shape one of the most visible and strategically important fundraising enterprises in college athletics. CU Boulder is positioned for significant growth, and the Deputy Athletic Director for Philanthropy & Strategic Initiatives will play a central role in fueling championship excellence, student-athlete success, and long-term institutional impact.

Application Process

University of Colorado Boulder invites nominations and applications or expressions of interest to be submitted to the search firm assisting the University. Applications must include a cover letter, resume or curriculum vitae, and list of references. For full consideration, application materials should be submitted to Parker Executive Search's **website** by February 20, 2026. Confidential review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made.

For additional information, please contact:

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