



## **The University of Chicago Director of Athletics and Recreation**

The University of Chicago, one of the nation's preeminent institutions of higher education, seeks a strategic, ambitious, and experienced leader to serve as Director of Athletics and Recreation. This is an exciting time for the teams and athletes and senior leadership at the University is deeply committed to the next chapter of athletics and recreation at the University of Chicago. Success in this position will require an appreciation of the mission of NCAA Division III athletics and the student athlete experience and the importance of student well-being. Also, an appreciation of the University of Chicago's distinct values and culture and an ability to partner across a complex organizational structure.

This is a tremendous opportunity for an enthusiastic and innovative leader to join the University of Chicago to oversee a diverse, accomplished athletic program that supplements the rigorous academic curriculum and demonstrates a clear and firm commitment to the integration of athletics into the fabric of higher education. Success in this position will require a leader with the strategic vision and ability to build the Department of Athletics & Recreation, wisdom, superb judgment, and the ability to collaborate broadly. Candidates should also bring the operational skills and experience necessary to lead a large staff, budget, and space.

The Director of Athletics and Recreation will oversee the Department of Athletics & Recreation, with an annual operating budget of \$9.6 million; a staff of approximately 56; two indoor athletic and recreational facilities; a turf football/soccer/lacrosse field; a natural grass field for baseball, softball, and soccer; a practice field; eight tennis courts; and a 400-meter track. The Department sponsors 20 intercollegiate sports, 40 club sports, and a diverse intramural sports program in which thousands of students participate each year.

### **The University of Chicago**

Founded in 1892 by John D. Rockefeller, the University of Chicago is one of the world's leading universities, with an extraordinary history of world-renowned research and education across a broad spectrum of fields. More than 100 Nobel laureates are associated with the University of Chicago, including seven current faculty members. The University of Chicago is known for its excellent faculty, consistently strong and increasingly diverse student body, and a distinctive urban campus with strong community connections.

The University is home to more than 13,600 faculty, academic personnel, and staff and to students from 50 U.S. states and over 100 countries. In the fall of 2025, the University enrolled 7,500 students in its undergraduate College, 10,518 students in its graduate arts and sciences programs and professional schools, and more than 400 students in special programs. Approximately 380 students are also enrolled in off-campus programs, including the Booth School of Business campuses in London and Hong Kong.

Additionally, the University operates a major medical center; the nation's largest academic press; two national laboratories (Argonne National Laboratory and Fermilab); the N-12 Laboratory Schools; and four charter school campuses on the South Side of Chicago.

Undergraduates in the College at UChicago choose from among 68 undergraduate majors and 57 minors. The College is notable for its Core curriculum, the most expansive amongst highly ranked American colleges. Graduate students study in four divisions, ( physical sciences, biological sciences, social sciences, and arts & humanities) and seven highly ranked professional schools (Booth School of Business, the Pritzker School of Medicine, the Law School, the Pritzker School of Molecular Engineering, the Divinity School, the Harris School of Public Policy, and the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice ). Students also enroll in the Graham School for lifelong learning programs. The University runs on a quarter system, in which the academic year is divided into four terms.

Located in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood on Lake Michigan, the University's 211 acres feature traditional English Gothic and modern buildings designed by world-class architects.

The University of Chicago has been ranked #6 by U.S. News & World Report Best National Universities, 2025 edition. The University's graduate schools have also been ranked: The Booth School of Business and the Law School are #4 and #3 respectively. The College has nearly 50,000 applications and a 4% selectivity this year. This represents an overall increase of 57% of applications over the past decade. The College attracts students who bring high expectations and energy to the campus.

### **University Values and the Student Experience**

The University of Chicago has always maintained an uncompromising vision of advanced learning, which has allowed scholars to pursue various academic and professional careers. Accompanying this vision is a particular culture that has been present since its founding and that values rigorous inquiry; freedom of expression; allows the most innovative ideas to be proposed, tested, and debated; and encourages scholars to question assumptions and demand evidence for assertions. This culture appreciates the quality of ideas and argument, regardless of their sources, and believes that reaching the best ideas means having a richly diverse and active campus community – encompassing students, faculty, other academic appointees, staff, and alumni – for whom learning is a never-ending process unbounded by the classroom.

Athletics and Recreation is organized within the larger Campus and Student Life (CSL) administrative unit. CSL carries the core mission of the University to all aspects of life outside the classroom. It enriches the lives of its students, staff, and faculty and academic staff members and contributes to a vibrant, collaborative, and diverse campus community that inspires excellence and sustains the University's culture of inquiry, innovation, and continuous learning. The unit also works to support the overall well-being of students, including their health and safety. This happens in the context of a campus located in a dynamic, thriving city, in which opportunities abound for students to learn from, contribute to, and engage with their urban environment.

CSL is importantly charged with the dual task of promoting the interests of students in the University, and managing multiple campus departments and services that serve the entire campus community, including Athletics & Recreation; the Office of the Bursar; Center for Leadership and Involvement; Student Integrity; International House; Office of International Affairs; Office of the University Registrar; Rockefeller Memorial Chapel; Spiritual Life; Student Centers; Center for Identity + Inclusion, University Community Service Center; Student Disability Services; UChicago HELP; Student Wellness; and UChicago Dining. While each academic division and school has its own student affairs and advising staff operating in a decentralized environment, these units communicate and collaborate with CSL and rely on the central services it provides.

The College, with support from CSL, oversees undergraduate housing for the University. Housing and Residence Life is charged with ensuring that the University's residential program strengthens campus life, providing an opportunity for faculty, staff, resident heads, and students to live and learn together and strengthen their engagement with the University community. Current housing includes seven residence halls that are divided into 48 Houses, each with an average of 80 students and with its own traditions and House Council. First and Second-year students are required to live on campus, and housing is guaranteed but not required after the first two years. Approximately 4,500 undergraduates can be accommodated on campus at present. The University's goal is to be able to provide housing to at least 70 percent of undergraduates and to couple that with rich programming that enhances the residential experience.

### **Athletics & Recreation**

With a rich and storied history, the University of Chicago's Department of Athletics & Recreation endeavors to serve the broad range of fitness, physical recreation, and athletic needs of the University of Chicago community. Numerous open recreation opportunities are provided in the two indoor facilities: the world-class Gerald Ratner Athletics Center, which features the 50-meter Myers-McLoraine Swimming Pool; and the historic Henry Crown Field House, as well as the outdoor fields, courts, and running track. On an average day, approximately 2,100 students, faculty and staff use the athletic and recreational facilities on campus.

The Department sponsors more than 40 club sports and a diverse intramural sports program in which approximately 8,500 students participate each year. Fitness class opportunities are offered through the FitChicago Program as well as a variety of more formal instructional activities. Personal training services are also available to individuals and small groups.

As part of community outreach efforts, the Department runs a summer sports camp and community swim school for children and youth in the neighborhood and beyond. Varsity athletes are also active in service and fundraising efforts to support national and local organizations, including Special Olympics, Ronald McDonald House and Coach to Cure MD.

The Department sponsors 20 intercollegiate teams and 570 student-athletes in the following sports: baseball (M), basketball (M/W), cross country (M/W), football (M), lacrosse (W), soccer (M/W), softball (W), swimming & diving (M/W), tennis (M/W), track & field (M/W), wrestling (M), and volleyball (W). UChicago has competed within NCAA Division III since the latter's inception in 1973. In 1986, the University was a founding member of the University Athletic Association (UAA). Currently comprising eight institutions (Brandeis University, Carnegie Mellon University, Case Western Reserve University, Emory University, New York University, University of Rochester, Washington University in St. Louis, and UChicago), UAA member schools share the belief that the success of intercollegiate athletics is wholly dependent upon institutional integrity and the ability of institutions to complete the full integration of athletics into the academic fabric of higher education. The UAA has served as a bold statement of what college athletics can and should be – that it is highly desirable and possible for a group of committed institutions to conduct a broad-based program of intercollegiate athletics for men and women; to compete with like academic institutions spread over geographically expansive areas; and to seek excellence in athletics while maintaining a perspective which holds the student-athlete and the academic mission of the institution as the center of focus. The University also holds memberships with the Midwest Conference (football).

The University of Chicago provides student athletes with the best balance in higher education: an extraordinary commitment to academic excellence recognized around the world, a high- quality intercollegiate athletic program consistent with the University's academic mission, unique conference competition and travel, and outstanding athletic and recreational facilities and services.

In 2024-25, the University of Chicago finished 9th in the nation among 340 NCAA III institutions in the final standings for the Learfield Sports Directors' Cup, which recognizes the top overall athletic programs in the country. Over the course of 2024-25, eight teams qualified for their NCAA national tournaments/championship, three UAA conference team championships, two Top 3 national finishes, and seven Individual National Champions, 32 All-Region honorees, two UAA Rookies of the year and three coaches of the year.

## **Position**

The University of Chicago seeks a dynamic and experienced leader for the position of Director of Athletics and Recreation. Reporting directly to the Dean of Students in the University and serving on the CSL leadership team, the Director of Athletics and Recreation will be empowered to design and implement athletics and recreation programs. They must understand the important balance between academic success in a rigorous academic setting and athletic, recreational, and wellness endeavors, while working to support this commitment with faculty, other academic appointees, and staff, both internal and external to the Department. The new Director of Athletics and Recreation must possess leadership skills, knowledge, and appreciation for intercollegiate athletics, intramural and club sports and recreation, and significant fundraising experience. Other key responsibilities are recruiting and managing key personnel, including 13 head coaches and six direct reports, oversight of the Department's budget, fundraising, marketing, planning for and overseeing sports facilities, and completing all other duties as assigned by the University. They must be a strategic partner with the Dean of Students in the University and other senior leaders, and advocate for student needs, build community, and collaborate with the College, the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, and the Office of Advancement, among other critical university partners.

As part of the core values of the University, the Director must have an appreciation for the critical importance of diversity and inclusion initiatives and is to cultivate an aligned, inclusive and respectful community. This expectation will be executed with innovative programming for students and staff, diverse applicant pools for employment opportunities, and working closely with campus partners to ensure these values are part of a holistic approach to recruiting diverse student-athletes.

The Director must also ensure strict compliance with NCAA rules and regulations and all applicable UAA, Midwest Conference and University policies.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

Provide exemplary and visionary leadership and role-modeling for sustaining a culture of professionalism, integrity, and respect at all levels.

- Lead the athletics, fitness, and recreational sports programs that report to the Director of Athletics and Recreation and provide a vision and strategy by setting goals, stimulating program development, allocating resources, assessing student and other institutional needs, developing appropriate policies, fostering open communication with and among campus constituencies, promoting relevant evaluation methodologies, and participating in decision-making processes.

- Oversee the administration of the intercollegiate athletics program. Maintain accountability for its design, operation, and evaluation, ensuring compliance with institutional, UAA, Midwest Conference, and NCAA guidelines and requirements. Monitor Title IX compliance.
- In collaboration with the University Advancement department, develop a strategic plan to ensure ongoing philanthropic effort and success.
- Identify and meet the Department's fundraising goals by leading the strategic planning, coordination and supervision of fund-raising events and promotional activities for intercollegiate athletics.
- Partner with the Office of College Admissions to respond to and anticipate, in innovative and creative ways, the needs of a new generation of incoming students. Organize and monitor recruitment efforts of the coaching staff to ensure strong recruiting classes that meet institutional needs and goals.
- Provide the professional development and mentoring that are necessary to attract, develop, and retain a diverse group of successful coaches and administrative staff, while also fostering an inclusive environment bolstered by positive morale and strong relationships.
- Lead the management and operation of the Gerald Ratner Athletics Center and the Henry Crown Field House, as well as the outdoor fields, courts, and running track.
- Participate actively in national conference meetings and activities. Preside over and speak at signature University events, including the Annual Athletics Hall of Fame celebration and Aims of Athletics address.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships and communications with faculty, administrators, staff, the student body, student-athlete advisory bodies, alumni, parents and friends, donors, and the local community regarding athletics and recreation at the University.
- Continue departmental momentum around building and cultivating community relationships with local schools and non-profit organizations with engagement from departmental staff and student-athletes.
- Champion a committed effort to support students to find a balance between academic and athletic success in a rigorous academic setting, while simultaneously working with faculty/staff, both internal and external to the Department, to support this commitment.
- Serve as a strategic leader on campus, contributing to discussion about how to better serve students and the University's mission.
- Seek opportunities to participate and contribute to University committees and campus discussions on a variety of student and institutional issues.
- Provide vision and oversight for a quality and comprehensive intercollegiate sports information and marketing program.

### **The Successful Candidate**

The University of Chicago welcomes current athletic leaders, as well as those whose intellectual curiosity, collegiality, and proven understanding of Division III athletics will serve the University well. The successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- Excitement and optimism for the role of athletics and recreation in higher education while navigating the complexities of external forces impacting the work.
- Wisdom and superb judgment. The capacity to make and stand by difficult decisions while mindful of the need for fairness, consistency, and the impact of each decision on individuals and the broader community.

- Evidence of engagement in campus life issues and a record of providing support and opportunities for students. The ability to advocate persuasively for student interests and cultivate broader student engagement around supporting athletics.
- Liveliness of intellect and the commitment to engage collaboratively with colleagues. A habit of mind that will be at home in an intensely analytic culture that values rigorous inquiry and debate.
- A commitment to diversity and the ability to develop and support inclusive communities. A demonstrated record of advancing diversity and a deep understanding of the educational value of a diverse community.
- Ability to serve as an effective and willing ambassador for the Department and the University, including the capacity to be an effective leader in fundraising efforts.
- A record of fostering excellence in student development. The ability to foster collaboration and productive partnerships with a broad range of constituencies, both within and outside the institution.
- Proven skills as a senior manager in a complex organization. Demonstrated ability to mentor and develop staff and provide successful oversight of people, budget, and space. An inclination to clarity and accountability.
- The flexibility, managerial creativity, and resiliency required to achieve results in an intricate organization. Openness to risk, change, and criticism. A high degree of self-confidence and the ability to face challenges calmly.
- Ability to build creative partnerships and engage faculty, students, staff and parents as champions of athletics.
- Demonstrated capacity to communicate broadly across the University and work across boundaries, cultivate and sustain collegial relationships, and build unity around difficult issues.
- The maturity, presence, and gravitas to engage effectively with all constituencies, including University trustees.
- Devotion to the highest ethical standards and personal and professional integrity above reproach. Play an active role in refining, articulating, and disseminating these standards.

### **Qualifications**

- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.
- Leadership with the highest ethical standards.
- Demonstrated commitment to a program of academic and athletic excellence.
- Demonstrated experience in donor development and fundraising.
- Coaching and teaching experience is highly desirable.

### **Application Process**

The University of Chicago 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, and list of references. For full consideration, application materials should be submitted to Parker Executive Search's [website](#) by April 24, 2026. Confidential review of materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment is made.

For additional information, please contact:

Daniel Parker, Vice President and Managing Director  
 Grant Higgison, Principal  
 Khristian Carr, Executive Recruiting Coordinator  
 Parker Executive Search  
[ghiggison@parkersearch.com](mailto:ghiggison@parkersearch.com) | [kcarr@parkersearch.com](mailto:kcarr@parkersearch.com)  
 770-804-1996 x. 118 | 770-804-1996 x. 134

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