



Iowa State University
Jamie and Ellen Pollard Endowed Cyclone Director of Athletics

About Iowa State University

Founded in 1858, Iowa State University is the nation's first land-grant institution and one of the country's leading public research universities. Located in Ames, Iowa, the university enrolls more than 30,000 students from all 50 states and over 100 countries and is recognized as a Carnegie R1 institution for its commitment to research, innovation, and public impact.

As Iowa's land-grant university, Iowa State is committed to creating, sharing, and applying knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place. Through excellence in teaching, research, extension, and outreach, the university prepares students to become leaders while advancing solutions to society's most pressing challenges. Iowa State offers more than 100 undergraduate majors and hundreds of graduate and professional degree programs across eight academic colleges, earning national recognition in agriculture, engineering, business, design, veterinary medicine, and the sciences.

Guided by its [2022-2031 Strategic Plan](#), Iowa State is committed to fostering an innovative student experience, strengthening research and economic development, advancing operational excellence, and cultivating a welcoming community where every individual can thrive. These priorities are reinforced by the university's Principles of Community, which emphasize respect, purpose, cooperation, richness of diversity, freedom from discrimination, and honest, respectful expression of ideas as the foundation for a vibrant learning and working environment.

With a tradition rooted in innovation, service, and opportunity, Iowa State continues to build upon its legacy as a nationally recognized institution committed to improving lives through education, discovery, and engagement.

About Iowa State Athletics

Iowa State Athletics has established itself as one of the nation's premier and most innovative intercollegiate athletics programs. As a proud member of the Big 12 Conference, the department sponsors 18 NCAA Division I varsity sports and is committed to providing a transformational student-athlete experience centered on competitive excellence, academic achievement, leadership development, health and well-being, and personal growth.

Over the past two decades, Iowa State Athletics has experienced remarkable and sustained growth under the leadership of Endowed Cyclone Director of Athletics Jamie Pollard. The department has significantly elevated its national profile through competitive success across multiple sports, transformational investments in athletics facilities, record-setting philanthropic support, and the cultivation of one of the nation's most passionate and loyal fan bases.

Recognized nationally for its entrepreneurial approach to college athletics, Iowa State has consistently embraced innovative strategies that enhance the fan experience and strengthen the department's financial position. From pioneering new revenue-generating initiatives to expanding premium seating opportunities, enhancing game-day experiences, and pursuing creative business strategies, Iowa State has become a model for innovation and long-term sustainability in Division I athletics.

As college athletics continues to evolve through revenue sharing, Name, Image and Likeness (NIL), changing governance structures, and expanded commercial opportunities, Iowa State Athletics is uniquely positioned to build upon a strong foundation while continuing to compete at the highest levels of intercollegiate athletics. The department remains committed to developing championship-caliber programs while advancing the mission and strategic priorities of Iowa State University.

About the Position

Iowa State University seeks a visionary, collaborative, and strategic leader to serve as its next Endowed Cyclone Director of Athletics. Reporting directly to the President and serving as a member of the university's leadership team, the Director of Athletics will provide strategic vision, executive leadership, and operational oversight for one of the nation's most respected NCAA Division I athletics programs.

This opportunity represents a pivotal moment in the history of Iowa State Athletics. Following the announcement of the retirement of Jamie Pollard, the university seeks a leader who will build upon more than two decades of extraordinary success while positioning the department to thrive amid the rapidly changing landscape of intercollegiate athletics. The successful candidate will inherit an athletics program with strong institutional support, exceptional competitive momentum, a deeply engaged fan base, outstanding facilities, and a national reputation for innovation and responsible stewardship.

As the university's chief athletics officer, the Director of Athletics will serve as a trusted advisor to the President and an ambassador for Cyclone Athletics across the university, the state of Iowa, the Big 12 Conference, and the national athletics community. The position carries responsibility for every aspect of the department, including student-athlete success, competitive excellence, personnel leadership, fundraising and revenue generation, financial stewardship, facilities, strategic planning, external engagement, compliance, and governance.

Working collaboratively with university leadership, coaches, faculty, alumni, donors, corporate partners, conference officials, and community stakeholders, the next Endowed Cyclone Director of Athletics will strengthen the connection between athletics and the university's broader mission while ensuring Iowa State remains a national leader in competitive excellence, innovation, and the holistic development of student-athletes.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership & Vision

- Develop and articulate a compelling long-term vision for Iowa State Athletics that builds upon the department's tradition of innovation, competitive excellence, and service while positioning the program for continued success within the Big 12 Conference and nationally.
- Provide strategic leadership in navigating the rapidly evolving landscape of intercollegiate athletics, including revenue sharing, Name, Image and Likeness (NIL), governance reform, conference dynamics, commercial opportunities, and the evolving student-athlete model.
- Serve as a trusted advisor to the President and senior leadership, providing strategic counsel on athletics and issues impacting the university's broader institutional priorities.
- Foster a culture of innovation, accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement while preserving the values and culture that have contributed to Iowa State's sustained success.

Student-Athlete Success & Competitive Excellence

- Champion a student-athlete-centered culture that promotes academic achievement, competitive success, leadership development, health and well-being, and lifelong success.
- Ensure student-athletes have access to the resources, services, and support necessary to thrive academically, athletically, professionally, and personally.
- Recruit and retain talented coaches and administrators who are committed to achieving excellence and supporting the academic, athletic, and personal success of student-athletes.
- Promote championship-caliber performance while upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct and NCAA compliance.

External Relations, Revenue Generation & Innovation

- Champion Iowa State Athletics as its chief ambassador, building and sustaining influential partnerships with alumni, donors, corporate partners, fans, elected officials, conference leadership, media, and national athletics organizations in support of the university's mission and strategic priorities.
- Lead comprehensive fundraising efforts in partnership with the Iowa State University Foundation to advance strategic initiatives, capital projects, scholarships, endowments, and annual giving priorities.
- Cultivate transformational relationships with donors, alumni, and friends of the university that inspire philanthropic investment and long-term engagement.
- Develop and implement innovative strategies to diversify and maximize revenue through philanthropy, sponsorships, ticket sales, premium experiences, media opportunities, licensing, hospitality, and other entrepreneurial initiatives.
- Build upon Iowa State's tradition of identifying creative business opportunities that strengthen the department's financial sustainability while enhancing the fan and student-athlete experience.
- Collaborate with university communications, marketing, and external relations to elevate the visibility, reputation, and national brand of Cyclone Athletics.

Leadership, Operations & Financial Stewardship

- Provide strategic leadership and oversight for all athletics personnel, fostering a high-performing culture grounded in trust, accountability, collaboration, transparency, and professional development.
- Recruit, mentor, evaluate, and retain exceptional senior administrators, coaches, and staff while developing future leaders throughout the department.
- Oversee the department's financial operations through responsible stewardship of institutional, philanthropic, and external resources.
- Develop sustainable business strategies that position Iowa State Athletics for long-term financial success in an increasingly complex and competitive environment.
- Provide executive oversight for athletics facilities, capital planning, game operations, technology, and infrastructure to support the department's strategic objectives.
- Continuously evaluate organizational effectiveness and implement operational improvements that enhance efficiency, service, and organizational performance.

Governance, Compliance & University Engagement

- Ensure full compliance with NCAA, Big 12 Conference, university, state, and federal rules, regulations, and policies.
- Foster a culture of ethical leadership, transparency, accountability, and institutional integrity across the athletics department.
- Work collaboratively with faculty, university leadership, the Faculty Athletics Representative, and campus partners to ensure athletics remains fully integrated into the academic mission of the university.
- Build strong partnerships across campus that advance Iowa State's strategic priorities and strengthen the role of athletics as an important contributor to institutional success.
- Represent Iowa State University in conference governance, NCAA committees, and national organizations while advocating for the interests of the university and its student-athletes.
- Serve as a visible and engaged leader throughout the university, the Ames community, the state of Iowa, and the national collegiate athletics landscape.

Qualifications:

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required
- A minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible senior leadership experience in NCAA Division I athletics administration or a similarly complex organization, including significant executive leadership responsibilities.

Preferred Qualifications

- Advanced degree
- Senior executive experience leading a complex organization or major operating unit with responsibility for strategy, personnel, budget, operations, risk management, and stakeholder engagement.
- Demonstrated experience responding to major shifts in intercollegiate athletics, such as revenue sharing, Name, Image and Likeness (NIL), governance reform, conference realignment, commercial partnerships, or emerging regulatory requirements.
- Documented success developing and executing strategic initiatives that advance organizational performance, competitive excellence, student-athlete outcomes, and long-term institutional priorities.
- Evidence of successful revenue generation through philanthropy, donor engagement, corporate partnerships, sponsorships, premium seating, media rights, licensing, and other innovative business initiatives.
- Experience overseeing complex financial operations, including budget development, long-term financial planning, resource allocation, and fiscal stewardship.
- Proven ability to recruit, develop, mentor, and retain high-performing coaches, administrators, and staff while fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement.
- Demonstrated comprehensive understanding of the governance, compliance, and regulatory environment impacting Division I intercollegiate athletics.
- Demonstrated ability to communicate clearly and build productive relationships with multiple constituencies including students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, corporate partners, conference leadership, elected officials, and community stakeholders.
- Demonstrated political acumen and sound judgment with the ability to navigate complex institutional, conference, and external environments.
- A leadership style that can be assessed through examples of collaboration, transparency, trust-building, partnership development, and effective work across institutional or organizational boundaries.
- Demonstrated commitment to ethical leadership, student-athlete success, academic excellence, and institutional integrity.
- Evidence of a strategic vision, an entrepreneurial mindset, and the ability to identify opportunities that strengthen organizational performance and position Iowa State Athletics for sustained success.
- Commitment to fostering a culture of excellence, innovation, accountability, and service aligned with the mission and values of a public university or similar mission-driven organization.

Application Process

Iowa State University 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](#) by **September 23, 2026**. For additional information, please contact:

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