

# Major Gift Officer, Athletics

Jacksonville University

## THE OPPORTUNITY

The Angeletti Group invites nominations and applications to join the advancement team of Jacksonville University as a Major Gifts Officer for Athletics. This is an exciting opportunity for a fundraiser who thrives in a fast-paced, intercollegiate environment. The MGO, Athletics will have a tangible impact on the growing success and momentum of the University's Athletics programs as part of a transformational University-wide fundraising campaign.

Jacksonville University's Athletics encompasses 17 sports teams across NCAA Division I, ASUN Conference, and the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC). More than 450 student athletes are Jacksonville Dolphins, participating in 10 women's and 7 men's programs. Investments in Athletics facilities and programs in recent years have propelled Jacksonville Athletics to new heights, attracting a diverse student body who seek success in the classroom, on their playing surface, and in the community. The Basketball Performance Center opened in Spring 2022 and the Athletics Fieldhouse underwent renovations to the weight room and training room in Summer 2020. In 2019, the Rock Lacrosse Center opened, home to two Top 20 lacrosse programs (men's and women's) and featuring All-American selections in Men's and Women's lacrosse last Spring.

Jacksonville University Athletics has earned multiple conference championships and NCAA tournament berths in each of the last five years, as well as multiple conference coach-of-the-year honors. Jordan Mincy was named the Joe B. Hall Award winner as the nation's top first-year head coach in 2021-2022. This Spring, Jacksonville Athletics enjoyed wins over Duke, Stanford, Florida, Miami, Arizona State, and Georgetown.

## JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY'S BOLD VISION AND SURGING SUCCESS

Jacksonville University is transforming lives through innovations, scientific inquiry, and generating economic opportunity and growth that spans multiple community and public service sectors. As northeast Florida's premier private institution of higher education, Jacksonville University recently celebrated four consecutive years being ranked among the top 25 percent of regional universities on U.S. News & World Report's prestigious list of Best Colleges, as well as consistent recognition as a Best Value and Military Friendly school.

Founded in 1934, Jacksonville University offers more than 100 majors, minors, and programs, including in-demand degrees in Nursing, Business, Marine Science, Engineering, Finance, and Psychology, as well as those in the highly specialized fields of Aviation, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Film, Animation, and Healthcare Administration. In recent years, the University has successfully expanded to include five colleges, eleven schools and four institutes—including the recently announced College of Law and four-year medical school in partnership with Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine—and it has established nearly 500 partnerships with world-class companies, healthcare providers, and

community organizations. Every day, Jacksonville University delivers on its unwavering commitment to enhancing the lives of our students, our state, and the world forever.

Jacksonville University's President, Tim Cost, celebrated 10 years of service to the University this February. Under President Cost's leadership, the University has enjoyed an era of unparalleled success and growth. The Costs helped build the University into a \$400 million economic engine for Jacksonville and for the Arlington community it calls home. The growth, and the President's proactive approach to partnership, also helped attract more than \$500 million in private investment and development throughout Arlington.

## **JACKSONVILLE ATHLETICS**

It's an exciting time to be a Jacksonville Dolphin. Jacksonville Athletics recently re-branded to feature the new athletics theme and attitude, "Dare to Be Bold." This two-year process was spearheaded by members of the Athletics Department, representatives from across campus, students and key external constituents to develop new logos and word marks. With these new assets came a new branding mentality. There is intent to bring the Jacksonville community together and challenge the current and prospective student-athletes to leave a legacy.

Jacksonville Athletics is a total student-athlete program that embraces and experiences progression on the field as well as off the field when it pertains to students' personal growth and preparation for life after college. We appreciate the commitment student-athletes make to their academic and athletic goals and want to supplement that with key life skills training. Jacksonville Athletics aims to aid student-athletes in their transition into higher education, provide them with the necessary life skills to meet challenges they may face, and prepare them for life after graduation.

- 2,771 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
- 1,283 GRADUATE STUDENTS
- STUDENTS FROM 58 COUNTRIES AND 47 STATES REPRESENTED
- 11:1 STUDENT TO FACULTY RATIO
- NCAA DIVISION I, ASUN CONFERENCE, AND METRO ATLANTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE (MAAC) SPORTS TEAMS

## **ALEX RICKER-GILBERT, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**

Now in his seventh year as the Athletic Director, Alex Ricker-Gilbert has overseen growth and stability during a unique time period at both JU and in college athletics in general.

Recently named Athletics Director of the Year for the Division I-AAA level by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA), Alex was recognized for his leadership of the department through the COVID-19 pandemic and for capturing championships in men's soccer, women's lacrosse and baseball, as well as sending individuals in women's track & field and men's golf to the NCAA Championships.

He also serves as the chair of the NCAA Legislative Committee, officially stepping into that role in July of 2021. His responsibilities in that role include providing leadership to the subcommittee of the Division I

Council, whose primary task is to review and make recommendations to the Council regarding the merits of proposals developed through the shared governance process (conferences and Council committees).

Ricker-Gilbert was elevated to Senior Vice President and Athletic Director in July of 2018 after originally ascending to the role of AD on May 1, 2016. One of his major initiatives early in his tenure as Athletic Director was the creation and implementation of a distinct set of Core Values for JU Athletics. During his first year alone, the department saw a 23 percent increase in overall giving, an over 700 percent increase in unique donors, a 56 percent increase in sponsorship revenue, a 29 percent increase in ticketing revenue and a 15 percent increase in overall attendance. He has helped form impactful exclusivity partnerships with Nike/BSN (official apparel provider), Baptist Health and Jacksonville Orthopedic Institute (official healthcare provider), Learfield Licensing Partners, Baron (official ring provider), Papa John's (official pizza of JU Athletics) and Bono's Bar-B-Q (official bar-b-q of JU Athletics).

Recent enhancements under Ricker-Gilbert's direction include a new academic center and additional academic support staff, updated equipment in athletic training and the weight room, and partnerships with the Dietitians of Palm Valley (the Director of Performance Nutrition for the Jacksonville Jaguars), Cryotherapy JAX, and a dedicated sports performance coach. Additionally, Ricker-Gilbert helped secure a significant private contribution that fully funded the first-ever nutritional station for Dolphin student-athletes, JU Fuel. He also worked tirelessly to secure the funds that catapulted the development of the Jacksonville Lacrosse Center (JLC), the largest of its kind in the nation.

Ricker-Gilbert came to Jacksonville having spent the previous three years as Assistant Athletics Director for Compliance and Student-Services at Longwood University in Virginia. From 2013-16, Ricker-Gilbert held Longwood's senior compliance officer position for its 14 Division I programs and served as an academic advisor for the Lancers' softball, men's soccer, and men's and women's cross country teams. Ricker-Gilbert oversaw the scholarship budget, served as the SAAC Advisor, and was the liaison to financial aid, the registrar, admissions, and housing.

A native of Tolland, Connecticut, Ricker-Gilbert earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Kinesiology with Pennsylvania teaching certification in health and physical education from Penn State University in 2009. In 2011, he earned his Master of Public Administration degree with a Graduate Certificate in Sport Management and Athletics from West Chester University.

### **SCOTT BACON, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, STRATEGIC OPERATIONS**

Scott Bacon is Senior Vice President leading Marketing and Communications, University Advancement, Enrollment Management, and Strategic Events and Campus Experience at Jacksonville University.

Hired as Deputy Athletic Director for External Relations in June 2016, Bacon oversaw the athletic development, sponsorships, and marketing departments, as well as media relations. Additional responsibilities included developing and executing a strategic marketing and business plan, engaging stakeholders, determining appropriate budget allocations for chosen initiatives and ensuring a cohesive approach to brand awareness.

Prior to joining Jacksonville University, Bacon served for five years in a similar capacity at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. While at Longwood, Bacon was elevated from the Director of Development for Athletics to Senior Associate Athletics Director for External Relations.

The department saw a 300 percent revenue increase under his direction. He secured the largest local gift in school history with a contribution of over \$1 million and the first six-figure cash gift for athletics which led to a facility renovation for the Lancers' baseball program.

When he wasn't in the office, he could be caught in the broadcasting booth where he served as the Voice of the Lancers. Before LU, Bacon was the Director of Broadcasting and Media Relations for the Lynchburg Hillcats, a minor league baseball team currently affiliated with the Cleveland Indians.

A Cleveland native, Bacon earned his bachelor's degree in communications and broadcasting from Otterbein University in 2005. He received his Master of Education in Sport Leadership in 2015 from Virginia Commonwealth University.

### **FUTURE. MADE. CAMPAIGN: BUILDING ON SUCCESS**

This year, the University will launch the Future. Made. Campaign, the largest campaign in the institution's history. This initiative has already attracted record-breaking gifts and pledges from alumni, corporate and community leaders, and friends in support of the University's priorities across healthcare, technology, business, and law.

To date, the campaign has raised \$90 million in the silent phase toward its \$175 million goal in support of regional expansion of the University, the construction of the Medical Mall, development of both on and off campus areas, including activation of the Waterfront, and programs that challenge and enable students, faculty, and staff to reach new heights. Led by an engaged and active Campaign Committee comprised of alumni, donors, staff, and volunteers, the Future. Made. Campaign represents the next frontier for innovation and investment at Jacksonville University.

Prior to the Future. Made. Campaign, Jacksonville University successfully completed the record-setting ASPIRE campaign in 2018, raising more than \$121 million to support game-changing scholarships, inventive academics, sweeping campus upgrades, and dynamic student life. The campaign made possible more than \$100M worth of investment into the grounds and facilities of Jacksonville University's sprawling 240-acre campus. Athletics was a top priority during the ASPIRE Campaign that included both the Basketball Performance Center and the Rock Lacrosse Center. Once again, athletics will play a critical role in the Future. Made. Campaign with a focus on facilities, student-athlete scholarships and department resources.

### **Mission Statement**

Jacksonville University empowers students for life-long growth as global citizens through a transformative, innovative educational experience, built on excellence in community-centered service.

### **Vision**

Affirming the importance of scholarship, leadership, creativity, and service. Jacksonville University prepares students to build better communities and make meaningful contributions to an increasingly connected society. As a community, we aspire to:

- provide a distinctive campus experience for students, faculty, staff and visitors
- deliver undergraduate and graduate programs that are nationally recognized for quality and innovation

- be a center for intellectual and creative excellence and respectful discourse
- produce high quality research through undergraduate and graduate programs
- serve as an engine to economic vitality in northeast Florida

### **Values**

The Jacksonville University learning and living community values:

- leadership
- community
- wellness
- integrity
- respect
- curiosity

### **Priorities**

- Embrace diversity, practice inclusion, and strive for equity
- Enhancing the holistic student experience
- Recruit, retain and graduate students well positioned for lifelong success
- Cultivate a culture of quality and high performance across campus
- Fortifying academic programs that develop students who are both trained in their fields and broadly educated in the liberal arts and sciences
- Advance faculty and staff excellence and distinction
- Deliver robust infrastructure to improve efficacy and efficiency
- Engage community in impactful partnerships

### **ABOUT JACKSONVILLE: THE BOLD CITY**

The University's picturesque, 235-acre riverfront campus is minutes from downtown and from beautiful beaches. Jacksonville University also has three locations in Downtown Jacksonville and Palm Coast, including a 32,000-square-foot Healthcare Simulation Center downtown.

The University's bold plans for the future have spearheaded the "Renew Arlington" effort of community investment and economic development on and around campus, resulting in fruitful partnerships and opportunities for students, faculty, and alumni.

Named one of the fastest growing cities in the south, Jacksonville is a vibrant metropolis of nearly 1 million people that continues to live up to its nickname — The Bold City. Its population growth can be attributed, in part, to the thriving business community that includes both Fortune 500s and innovative startups. A spirit of entrepreneurship within Jacksonville fuels a diverse economy made up of many small

to midsize businesses. With its bustling airport and prime location along I-95 at Florida's northern border, Jacksonville serves as a healthcare hub for the Southeast. Industry leaders such as Mayo Clinic, MD Anderson Cancer Clinic, Baptist Health, UF Health and Brooks Rehabilitation provide world-class healthcare to the regional population and drive a burgeoning, competitive job market for healthcare professionals. At more than 760 square miles, Jacksonville is the largest city in the U.S. by land mass, offering a wide range of activities, entertainment and adventure. From the beaches to the arts district; from the amphitheaters to the eclectic restaurants; and from historic Northeast Florida landmarks to our NFL team (Go Jags!) — there's something for everyone.

## **THE MGO, ATHLETICS**

The Major Gifts Officer, Athletics is responsible for developing and implementing strategies to secure support for the athletics program at Jacksonville University. The MGO will serve as the University Advancement liaison to the Athletics department, with major gift support provided to the other areas of University Advancement as needed. With a dual report to the Senior Vice President, Strategic Operations and the Athletic Director, this position will work collaboratively across the University Advancement and University Athletics departments to develop donor strategy, build relationships, and achieve fundraising goals.

## **PRINCIPAL DUTIES**

- Develop and implement a comprehensive major gifts program to support Athletics at the University, including strategies for identifying, qualifying, cultivating, and soliciting major gift prospects.
- Manage a portfolio of major gift prospects and donors; develop and maintain relationships with these individuals to secure gifts in support of Athletics priorities.
- Engage in personal outreach, all necessary travel, oversight of gift closure process, and meeting metrics that include an expectation of, at minimum, 100-125 personal touchpoints/visits per year.
- Work alongside the Senior Vice President of Strategic Operations to establish a plan with specific goals and timetables to raise major and planned gifts within the scope of special projects, campaigns, endowment or annual fundraising needs.
- Collaborate with the Director of Athletics and other Athletics staff to develop fundraising priorities and initiatives that are aligned with university and campaign goals.
- Develop a compelling case for support encompassing the wide array of funding opportunities within Jacksonville University Athletics.
- Partner with top University leaders, including the President, Provost, Senior Vice President for Strategic Operations, Deans, and campaign counsel as well as the senior leaders of University Advancement to provide strategic planning and implementation of the University's multi-million-dollar capital campaign.
- Work with the Senior Vice President of Strategic Operations and Athletic Director to grow sponsorships for Athletics while driving revenue for the University.
- Strategize giving and engagement opportunities with leadership and coaches including capital projects, Dolphin Dash, Tip Off Club, special receptions and events, etc.

- Capitalize on the success and unprecedented excitement for Jacksonville Athletics to cultivate beneficial relationships with prospective supporters from alumni, parents, and friends of the university through high-touch and mass engagement strategies to increase prospect engagement.
- Foster collaborative and open communication with all coaches and teams to identify needs within the Athletics Department.
- Manage the growth strategy, implementation, and evaluation for athletics fundraising.
- Enhance board member engagement to help maximize the fundraising potential of JAX Backers and other sport specific advisory boards.
- Work with Advancement Marketing and Communications to develop major gift materials (e.g. proposals, overviews and other informational and stewardship materials).
- Work with Advancement Services to request research and other information on alumni, parents, and friends to qualify interest and giving potential.
- Track and report relationship management activity using Raisers Edge® constituent relationship management system.

This is not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and/or skills required for this position. The University reserves the right to amend and change responsibilities to meet institutional needs.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS AND PREFERENCES**

Jacksonville University is seeking a proven fundraiser with a demonstrated track record of accomplishments. The ideal candidate will possess the following:

- Five to seven years of fundraising or nonprofit experience, most of which is in a higher education setting or transferable field, Division I Athletics preferred.
- Must understand and be conversant in the business and vernacular of intercollegiate athletics.
- Ability to construct, articulate and implement an annual strategic development plan for a department.
- Demonstrated expertise in major gift fundraising, including successfully securing gifts of \$25,000 or more.
- Experience developing and implementing successful fundraising strategies and plans.
- Strong presentation skills, with the ability to effectively communicate the mission, vision, and priorities of the University to various audiences.
- Excellent writing and editing skills, with the ability to develop compelling proposals and other donor-facing materials.
- Strong interpersonal and relationship-building skills, with the ability to work collaboratively with a wide range of individuals including alumni, faculty, staff, donors, and volunteers.
- Entrepreneurial spirit and ability to forge new relationships on behalf of the University.
- Ability to represent the University with professionalism, integrity, and enthusiasm.

- Knowledge of the Jacksonville and Florida philanthropic communities.
- Strong familiarity with fundraising software, preferably Raiser's Edge.
- Work is primarily indoors but requires the incumbent to be in an outdoor environment when traveling between campus buildings, visiting outdoor sports facilities or being off campus.
- Attendance at evening and weekend events is required.
- Off-campus travel is required; occasionally, position may require travel beyond the Jacksonville metropolitan area.

#### **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. To be considered, candidates should submit a statement of interest and CV to The Angeletti Group at [search@theangelettigroup.com](mailto:search@theangelettigroup.com).

Nominations and confidential inquiries can be made to:

The Angeletti Group, (973) 540-1400, [search@theangelettigroup.com](mailto:search@theangelettigroup.com).

Jacksonville University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and actively seeks to diversify its work force. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, age, national or ethnic origin, disability, status as a veteran, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex, marital status, handicap, or pregnancy status.