



Search for the Director of Bands  
University of Notre Dame  
Notre Dame, IN

## THE OPPORTUNITY

The University of Notre Dame seeks a student-focused, collaborative, and visionary Director of Bands to guide the University's historic band program into its next era of eminence. Founded in 1845, Notre Dame's band program is the oldest continuously operating collegiate band in the country, and it has remained important to the identity and culture of the University since its inception. Its esteemed marching band, the Band of the Fighting Irish, performed for the football team's first game against the University of Michigan in 1887 and has not missed a single home game since. An all-volunteer student organization, the band program welcomes students from every academic discipline on campus and focuses on advancing Notre Dame's commitment to holistic student development. The next director will find that the marching band fully embodies its motto—*Tradition, Excellence, Family*—in every aspect of its work and culture.

The director leads the entirety of the University's 500-member band program, including the Band of the Fighting Irish, athletic bands, concert bands, and jazz bands. The director will craft a vision for the band program that balances tradition with innovation, empower and support the band staff in their professional growth, and strengthen the role of the bands as important vehicles for student formation. A visible presence on campus, the director will build strategic partnerships with other University units, including within the Division of Student Affairs, and more broadly with Athletics, the Alumni Association, Department of Development, and Undergraduate Admissions. Beyond campus, the director will be the public face of the band program, broadcasting its successes and inspiring donors to support its work.

The ideal candidate will bring leadership experience with collegiate marching bands; a strategic and collaborative approach to leadership; experience managing organizational staff, resources, and budgets; and a passion for the program's holistic approach to artistry, musicianship, and student development. The director will be a faculty member in the Department of Music and could hold a tenured, tenure-track, or professor of the practice appointment, depending on their credentials and level of experience.

A search committee has been formed and the executive recruiting firm Isaacson, Miller has been retained to support this search. Confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the firm as indicated at the conclusion of this document.

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

The [University of Notre Dame](#) was founded in 1842 by Rev. Edward F. Sorin, C.S.C., a priest of the Congregation of Holy Cross. It is located adjacent to South Bend, Indiana, the center of a metropolitan area with a population of more than 315,000. Chartered by the state of Indiana in 1844, the University was governed by the Holy Cross priests until 1967, when governance was transferred to a two-tiered, mixed board of lay and religious trustees and fellows. Notre Dame has grown from the vision of Father Sorin, who sought to establish a great Catholic university in America, and has remained faithful to its religious and intellectual traditions.

Today, aligned with its [mission](#), the University is a Catholic academic community of higher learning dedicated to the pursuit and sharing of truth, the advancement of knowledge through original inquiry and publication, and the education of students in mind, body, and spirit. Notre Dame welcomes, and is enriched by, the presence and voices of diverse scholars and students, and it is committed to academic freedom and welcomes all areas of scholarly activity. Catholic intellectuals play an important role in sustaining and deepening Notre Dame's Catholic mission, but the University is home to scholars and students of all backgrounds who have a respect for the objectives of Notre Dame and a willingness to enter into the conversation that gives it life and character.

Notre Dame is heavily residential, with about four in five undergraduate students living on campus. Students come to Notre Dame to learn not only how to think but also how to live, and often the experiences alumni carry from residence hall communities at Notre Dame remain vivid over a lifetime. The University has always attracted faculty who are broadly interested in teaching and scholarship, and who know that a Notre Dame education is more than what is taught in classrooms and laboratories. In Fall 2025, Notre Dame enrolled 8,923 undergraduates and 4,206 graduate and professional students. Notre Dame employs 1,526 instructional faculty and approximately 4,400 staff.

## THE NOTRE DAME BANDS

[The Notre Dame band program](#) is an integral part of campus life. Each year, approximately 500 students embody the band's motto—*Tradition, Excellence, Family*—through participation in concert bands, jazz bands, athletic bands, and most notably the University's marching band, the Band of the Fighting Irish. Over the course of the academic year, the bands put on numerous concerts; provide music for important University events, including liturgies and commencement; perform at basketball and ice hockey games; and play one of the most recognized and beloved of all university fight songs—the Notre Dame Victory March—as the Fighting Irish football team competes. An all-volunteer student organization, the bands include students from every field of study on campus and welcome members from nearby Holy Cross College and Saint Mary's College.

Comprising approximately 350 student members, the Band of the Fighting Irish has a long tradition of providing music and pageantry at Notre Dame football games. In recent years, the marching band has performed at the Fiesta Bowl, Sugar Bowl, Gator Bowl, and the National Championship. It received the

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2011-2012 Sudler Trophy, considered the Heisman Trophy for college bands, and was declared a "Landmark of American Music" by the Indiana Music Educators Association.

The bands enjoy a strong reputation and tour both domestically and internationally. They have recently performed in the Sydney Opera House, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, the Beijing Concert Hall, the Teatro Amazonas in Brazil, Severance Hall in Cleveland, and Carnegie Hall in New York City. In addition, the University hosts the nationally recognized [Collegiate Jazz Festival](#) (CJF) each February. Founded in 1959, CJF is the oldest and most prestigious college jazz festival in the nation, with a rich history of hosting excellent collegiate bands and esteemed clinicians.

## ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF BANDS

Serving as a faculty member in the [Department of Music](#) in the [College of Arts and Letters](#), and, as band director, reporting directly to the [associate vice president for student development](#), the Director of Bands leads and coordinates the activities of Notre Dame's historic 500-member band program in all its musical and academic pursuits, including the organization and administration of the Band of the Fighting Irish, athletic bands, concert bands, and jazz bands. The director is charged with safeguarding the traditions that have made the bands great since their founding, while crafting an ambitious vision for the bands and pursuing opportunities for mission-aligned growth and innovation. As the public face of the bands, the director will represent and advocate on behalf of the bands both across and beyond Notre Dame's campus. The director inspires and supervises the band's talented eight-member [staff](#).

As the band program looks to its future, the director will address the following interrelated opportunities and challenges as key priorities:

### **Champion Notre Dame's student development model.**

The bands are proud of the academic diversity of their students, of whom only a small percentage major in music. These students engage broadly across campus and participate in the band as volunteers, some without previous participation in a marching band or other ensemble. Student leadership roles in the band are not rewards for musical ability and performance alone, but are also based on servant leadership and impact on the community. The successful candidate must embrace this context and celebrate Notre Dame's holistic model of student development, which values the personal growth of all students while also maintaining high musical and performance standards. The director will champion the idea that the bands and ensembles are important vehicles for student formation, leadership development, and peer mentorship, as well as performance.

### **Develop a vision that balances tradition with innovation.**

As the oldest organization of its kind in the nation, the bands are steeped in rich history and tradition. The director will value these traditions while embracing opportunities for innovation and growth that are aligned with the band's mission and authentic to its identity. The director will be an engaged leader in the field, keeping abreast of current practices and national trends, while also remaining devoted to the unique

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culture of the Notre Dame bands. The director will use this broad perspective to craft a vision for the band program that honors its history while guiding it forward into an even brighter future.

#### **Partner with, support, and develop the band staff.**

The director coordinates, supervises, motivates, and develops the talented professional band staff who are involved in all functions of the operational, artistic, and student development work of the bands. The director will lead and support staff through clear communication, role articulation, and collaboration to further enhance show production, logistics, and the creative development of written, graphic, and performance elements including musical arrangements, drill writing, and show prop design. The director will work closely with the professional staff and student band leaders to appropriately and respectfully manage limited rehearsal time alongside the students' other academic and cocurricular commitments.

#### **Strengthen collaborations across campus.**

The bands are broadly visible and recognized both across and beyond campus, and they play an important symbolic role in the life of the University. The director will recognize this important role and strengthen collaborations across campus, including with key partners within the Division of Student Affairs, as well as more broadly with Athletics, the Alumni Association, Department of Development, and Undergraduate Admissions. At the same time, requests for appearances far exceed the band program's capacity. As such, the director must be strategic in developing these partnerships, respecting the all-volunteer nature of the bands and the limited availability of the students, and ensuring collaborations are mission-aligned and provide developmental opportunities for students to grow.

#### **Serve as the public face of the bands.**

The director serves as the public face of the bands, and by extension the University, in a variety of settings both on campus and beyond. An effective spokesperson with experience speaking to diverse constituencies, including alumni, prospective students, community members, and the media, the director must represent Notre Dame with professionalism and grace in all settings. As a visible member of the Notre Dame community, the director will also collaborate with key University partners to cultivate, steward, and inspire broad support for the band program.

### **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The director must bring experience with collegiate marching bands and ideally concert, jazz, and/or ensemble bands. This individual will be a highly accomplished musician and artistic leader capable of creating programs that challenge, engage, and educate students, and of producing large-scale performances and concerts that represent the diversity of talent and experience within the bands. The director will be a faculty member in the Department of Music and could hold either a tenured, tenure-track, or professor of the practice appointment, depending on their credentials and level of experience. The director must be able to stand or walk for extended periods of time, perform duties in outdoor settings with exposure to weather, and carry 25-30 lbs. unassisted. This person must have a flexible schedule, as band activities span the full calendar year, including nights and weekends.

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In addition to the required qualifications outlined above, the successful candidate will bring many, if not all, of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- A collaborative approach to leadership, with a record of achievement that inspires the staff and students in the band program and resonates with the core mission of the University;
- Experience with a model of student development that promotes holistic student formation; a sincere interest in being a visible and accessible presence on campus and among students;
- A broad perspective on organizational leadership that balances tradition with innovation; a commitment to excellence that honors the past while pushing forward into the future;
- Experience leading and developing a high-achieving, talented, and dedicated staff; the ability to delegate, hold others accountable, and communicate clearly; exceptional organizational skills;
- Experience with organizational budgeting; the ability to manage financial resources responsibly;
- The personal presence needed to represent the bands and the University to external audiences; an ability to generate broad excitement for the band program;
- A sincere commitment to cultivating a culture of inclusion, respect, and belonging;
- Strong interpersonal skills, including an aptitude for listening and relationship development; focus and discipline that are balanced by curiosity, empathy and warmth; integrity of the highest order;
- An earned doctorate in music or music education is preferred;
- The successful candidate will also possess a commitment to the University's Catholic, Holy Cross mission.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Applications (including CV and cover letter), inquiries, and nominations should be submitted in confidence to Claire Hennessey, Keith Mason, and Christina Errico via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-notre-dame/director-bands>.

*The University of Notre Dame is dedicated to equal employment opportunity and to the implementation of positive programs designed to ensure the prevention of any discriminatory practices, either intentional or inadvertent, with respect to race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability, veteran status, age, or sex.*

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