



Search for the Director, School of Music University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

THE OPPORTUNITY

The [University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign](#) seeks an inspiring, strategic, and collaborative leader to serve as the Director of the [School of Music](#) (SOM or the School). Reporting to the Dean of the [College of Fine and Applied Arts](#) (FAA), the Director will bring a deep understanding of artistic excellence and academic distinction and will develop a compelling vision for the School's future that builds on its many strengths.

As part of a major, public, land-grant, research university, the SOM shapes the next generation of performers, creators, scholars, and educators who lead the future of music locally, nationally, and globally. Through academic rigor, innovative artistry, inclusive excellence, and collaboration, the School empowers students to develop their artistic voice, intellectual curiosity, and professional skills. Its distinguished faculty lead by example, inspiring students to explore new frontiers in music's historically and globally rich cultural landscape. The SOM enjoys rich opportunities for collaboration across FAA and the broader campus. As part of a college that includes nationally recognized programs across myriad disciplines, the School is well positioned to advance interdisciplinary initiatives in performance, technology, design, public engagement, and civic life.

The SOM is one of the nation's leading public music schools, with recognized programs in performance, composition, music education, jazz, musicology, music technology, and interdisciplinary collaboration. The School is committed to artistic excellence while embracing the evolving realities of musical practice, production, pedagogy, and cultural engagement. It is now poised for a Director who can lead faculty, staff, and students in building upon its many strengths and delivering a forward-looking, engaged, and entrepreneurial model of music study that expands pathways for creativity, supports diverse musical traditions, and strengthens connections between the academy and contemporary musical life. The Director will guide the School in shaping an environment that prepares students to thrive as artists, educators, creators, scholars, and cultural leaders in a rapidly evolving musical landscape.

A search committee has been formed and the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller has been retained to support this recruitment. Confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the firm as indicated on page 6 of this document.

THE COLLEGE OF FINE AND APPLIED ARTS

The [College of Fine and Applied Arts](#) is singular in the nation for its diversity, innovation, and breadth. Its mission is dedicated to the advancement, practice, and understanding of the arts, and its central focus is the synergy between research and the preparation of students for professional careers in the creation and interpretation of the environmental, visual, and performing arts. Deeply related to that focus is the commitment to elevate and sustain the study of the arts as both a necessary mode of understanding and a vibrant expression of human experience within the local, national, and international communities.

The college comprises the Schools of [Music](#), [Architecture](#), and [Art and Design](#); Departments of [Dance](#), [Landscape Architecture](#), [Theatre](#), and [Urban and Regional Planning](#); program in [Sustainable Design](#); [Krannert Center for the Performing Arts](#); [Krannert Art Museum](#); and [Japan House](#). FAA employs more than 660 faculty members and staff, including more than 150 tenure system faculty members, and more than 1,850 undergraduate and 635 graduate students enroll in FAA's more than 30 majors and 10 minors.

[Jacob Pinholster](#) began his term as Dean of the College in September 2024. Prior to joining Illinois, he served as executive dean for enterprise design in the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts at Arizona State University and founding director of the ASU Media and Immersive eXperience Center, an emerging media technologies and practices facility in the center of downtown Mesa, Arizona. He earned a BFA in Theatre Production and an MFA in Scenic and Lighting Design from the University of Florida.

THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The [School of Music](#) is a center for creativity and collaboration, embracing both tradition and innovation through performance, research, and education. The School opened in 1895 and has been accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music since 1933. From the beginning of its [storied history](#), the intent of the School was to balance “first-class courses” with performance, a value that persists today.

As of Spring 2026, the School enrolls 406 undergraduate students, 75 master's students, and 150 doctoral students in [undergraduate](#) (BMus, BMA, BME, BA, BS) and [graduate](#) (MM, DMA, MME, PhD) degree programs across ten areas: Composition, Theory & Music Technology; Conducting; Jazz Performance; Keyboard; Lyric Theatre; Music Education; Musicology; Strings; Voice; and Winds and Percussion. The School also offers three minors: Music, Music Theatre, and a graduate minor in Music and Sound Studies intended for non-music majors. The School enjoys a distinguished reputation across its programs, and it continues to expand its offerings, for instance through the [Hip Hop Innovation Center](#). Part of a broader arts college, the SOM benefits from close relationships with other units, including Dance and Theatre.

The School offers a large selection of [ensembles](#) that are open to all students regardless of major. Since 1868, the Marching Illini has entertained millions of fans with traditional and innovative performances that have made them “The Nation's Premier College Marching Band.” The SOM upholds the highest ideals of the University's land-grant heritage through its [Public Engagement programs](#), which draw upon the talents of current faculty and students to provide outstanding music experiences for people on campus,

in the community, and throughout the state of Illinois. Some ensembles, including Campus Band, University Band, Black Chorus, and Oratorio Society, are open to community members.

Long recognized as a leader among schools of music, the SOM pushes the bounds of scholarly discourse, artistic performance, and pedagogical innovation. Faculty members engage in innovative research and practice, and many maintain active performing, publishing, and composing careers. The faculty comprises 80 members, of whom 47 are tenured or tenure-track. The staff comprises 14 individuals with responsibilities in administration, advancement, operations, instruments, and facilities. The School embraces a culture of shared governance. The Executive Committee, an elected body of the faculty, serves in an advisory capacity to the Director regarding School-wide policies, strategic priorities, and resource planning. The ten Areas, led by Area Chairs, function as disciplinary subsets of the larger School, focusing on curriculum, instructional assignments, student matters, and provide, among other things, input on admissions and awards.

The students, faculty, and staff work across a diverse range of grand and state-of-the-art [facilities](#). Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, [Smith Memorial Hall](#) houses studios, practice rooms, rehearsal equipment and space, and an 870-seat recital hall. The [Krannert Center](#), one of the nation's premier university performing arts centers, is home to a breadth of resources including rehearsal rooms, costume shops, and four unique performance venues, including Foellinger Great Hall, which the Chicago Symphony has used for commercial recordings. The [Music Building](#) houses most of the School's administrative functions, classrooms, and practice rooms, as well as the Auditorium, a recording studio, the [Music and Performing Arts Library](#), the Computer-Assisted Music Instruction Laboratory, and the [Experimental Music Studios](#). The [A.A. Harding Band Building](#) houses the band program as well as the Carl Busch Historical Instrument Collection and [Sousa Archives and Center for American Music](#).

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

The Director is the chief administrative officer of the School of Music and reports to the Dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts. In collaboration with faculty, staff, students, and college leadership, the Director is responsible for all academic, artistic, and administrative affairs of the School, including vision setting, strategic planning, curricular development, faculty hiring and mentorship (including promotion and tenure), staff management and development, student recruitment and success, budgeting and financial management, fundraising and development, and facilities management. The annual operating budget for the SOM is approximately \$8.95 million, and the combined value of the School's endowments is approximately \$31 million. The School's dedicated faculty and staff, including an [administrative team](#), support the Director in these efforts.

The Director will arrive on campus at a critical moment requiring creative and strategic leadership as well as respectful and resourceful change management. Faculty, staff, and students are eager to partner with a Director who will engage their energy and institutional knowledge; clarify the School's operational and administrative policies and processes; strengthen its financial position; and identify further opportunities for collaboration within the School, across the University, and with surrounding communities.

More specifically, the Director will address the following interrelated opportunities and challenges:

Articulate a shared vision and a collective sense of purpose for the School

The Director will consult broadly across the School, engaging each of its many constituencies to understand and identify shared values, goals, and needs. As a result, the Director will develop a broad understanding of the School's many strengths and assets, as well as the key opportunities and challenges facing it. With this understanding, the Director will lead the School in crafting a shared vision that guides the School forward collectively and strategically. The faculty, staff, and students each do excellent work, but this work at times occurs in silos; an enterprising Director will find meaningful ways to align the School's constituencies around a shared sense of purpose that is rooted in its unique history and context, aims for its future, and enables people to see themselves as part of a larger whole.

Honor the School's storied history while innovating its approach and offerings

As broader artistic, cultural, technological, and financial contexts change, the Director will lead the School in adapting appropriately and developing curricula, programs, and pedagogies that prepare students for their lives and careers. In this work, the Director will honor the rich history of music-making and scholarship that make the School great while embracing new forms of creativity, connection, and impact. Positioned within a multi-disciplinary arts college and a major public research university, the SOM is perfectly positioned to lead the way with innovative, cross-disciplinary programs. The Director will leverage this context and the breadth of approaches within the SOM to champion the School's distinctiveness and develop new initiatives and programs that meet the evolving needs of students.

Recruit, develop, and retain exceptional faculty and staff

The School's single greatest asset is its people. A successful Director will recognize this and accordingly develop strategies to support and empower both the faculty and staff. In this work, the Director must acknowledge the genuine breadth of the work of the faculty and staff, as well as their diverse needs across disciplines, practices, and professions. The Director will partner meaningfully with the faculty and staff to lead efforts to recruit exceptional individuals, establish structures that support their development, and ensure their wellbeing and retention. The Director must be both responsive to the needs of different areas and units, and also fair and equitable across divisions.

Assess and refine the School's operating policies and processes

The SOM is a large, complex unit, and the faculty and students are supported in their work by a lean staff. The Director will attend carefully to this context, leading the School in defining and adhering to standard operating procedures, clarifying roles and lines of decisional authority, and ensuring workloads are equitable and manageable. This work is already underway, and the Director will advance it with a commitment to continuous improvement. To that end, the Director will continue to refine and optimize processes, policies, and communication channels within the SOM, thereby increasing administrative efficiency and information sharing, and decreasing risks of burnout and alienation.

Strengthen the School's financial health and ensure its sustainability

High-level instruction in music is extremely resource-intensive, and competition among schools and conservatories grows increasingly fierce each year. Collaborating closely with SOM faculty and staff and FAA leadership, the Director will address this context and ensure the School's financial health by effectively and prudently deploying resources, advocating on behalf of the SOM to leadership at the College and University, identifying and developing innovative opportunities for funding, and creatively addressing financial constraints. This work will be both internally and externally oriented. Internally, the Director will assess and refine the core business model of the School. Externally, the Director will connect with alumni, donors, civic and cultural leaders, and other audiences to develop support and resources for partnerships, programs, scholarships, fellowships, and facilities.

Champion the School across the University, with surrounding communities, and beyond

The Director will be both a steadfast advocate for the School and a collaborative and engaged university citizen and community member. They will champion the School's successes, broadcast its ambitions, and identify new opportunities for meaningful partnership that are mutually beneficial and grounded in shared need. Within the University, the Director will engage effectively with peer leaders of academic and artistic units to develop new programs and initiatives, as well as with senior leaders to make the case for the vital role of the School in a large, research-intensive, land-grant university. Beyond campus, they will cultivate new connections, deepen the School's commitment to public engagement, and strengthen its brand and reputation locally, across the state, and nationally.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The search committee understands that no single candidate will possess all the ideal qualifications and characteristics, but seeks candidates who bring many of the following:

- Distinguished record of achievement in music, music scholarship, music technology, music-related creative industries, arts leadership, or a closely related field;
- Demonstrated record of administrative leadership in a complex organization, including strategic prioritization, financial management, and transparent decision making (such experience may come from higher education, arts or cultural institutions, industry, or other relevant settings);
- A collaborative approach to leadership informed by emotional intelligence; the ability to bring groups together, listen, and communicate effectively with internal and external audiences;
- An appreciation for academic norms, including consensus building and shared governance; a curiosity that extends across the full scope of disciplines and methods represented at the School; an interest in building interdisciplinary collaborations across institutional boundaries;
- Experience with faculty, staff, and student recruitment, development, and retention, including sensitivity to the unique needs of a diverse community of practicing professionals and academics;
- An informed understanding of the changing landscape of music, including contemporary modes of creation, production, performance, distribution, and audience engagement;

- Demonstrated commitment to expanding access and opportunity and to supporting a broad range of cultural pathways, musical traditions, and student aspirations;
- Experience with fundraising, resource development, and/or building strategic partnerships;
- An optimistic, positive, growth-oriented, and forward-looking mindset;
- Credentials that merit appointment at the rank of full professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; an earned doctorate or equivalent terminal degree is preferred; in exceptional cases, a record of professional distinction, significant professional accomplishments, and leadership experience may be considered in lieu of a terminal degree and would support an alternative senior appointment consistent with University policy.

COMPENSATION

Total compensation will be commensurate with experience with a targeted range of \$190,000 - \$219,444, including salary (\$135,000 - \$155,000), administrative stipend, and summer salary. In addition, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign offers a very competitive portfolio of [Employee Benefits](#). This position is eligible for sponsorship except for sponsorship of a new H-1B petition that would incur the \$100,000 fee.

This position is based on the Urbana-Champaign campus, and the appointment will be a full-time, nine-month faculty position with a twelve-month administrative stipend. The target start date is August 2027.

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 Keith Mason, Stephen Kalogeras, and Alaine Small via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-illinois-urbana-champaign-college-fine-and-applied-arts/director-school>

The University of Illinois conducts criminal background checks on all job candidates upon acceptance of a contingent offer.

The University of Illinois offers a very competitive benefits portfolio. Click for a complete list of [Employee Benefits](#).

The University of Illinois System is an equal opportunity employer, including but not limited to disability and/or veteran status, and complies with all applicable state and federal employment mandates. We welcome individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and ideas who embrace and value [diversity and inclusivity](#). Please visit [Required Employment Notices and Posters](#) to view our non-discrimination statement and find additional information about required background checks, sexual harassment/misconduct disclosures, COVID-19 vaccination requirement, and employment eligibility review through [E-Verify](#).

Applicants with disabilities are encouraged to apply and may request a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (2008) to complete the application and/or interview process. Requests may be submitted through the reasonable accommodations [portal](#), or by contacting the Accessibility & Accommodations Division of the Office for Access and Equity at 217-333-0885, or by emailing accessibility@illinois.edu.

The University of Illinois must also comply with applicable federal export control laws and regulations and, as such, reserves the right to employ restricted party screening procedures for applicants.

APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Founded in 1867, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has a stellar reputation as a world-class leader in research, teaching, and public engagement. From the development of the modern web browser to the visible LED to the fundamental discovery of Archaea (the third kingdom of life), Illinois has a long-standing history of creating life-changing innovations that impact the world. Researchers at Illinois continually make foundational discoveries that transform the way we tackle global problems, develop technology, and expand the human experience.

The University of Illinois System has campuses in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago, and Springfield. The flagship campus in Urbana-Champaign is the largest of the three, situated on 1,783 acres. The metro population is more than 230,000, according to the 2020 U.S. Census.

Mission

The campus is led by Chancellor Charles L. Isbell, Jr., who is the chief executive officer for the Urbana-Champaign campus and is responsible for all financial programs, campus policies, and priorities, with the mission of ensuring a transformative educational experience for the world's next generation of leaders.

Illinois remains true to its land-grant mission to enhance the lives of all citizens in Illinois, across the nation, and around the world through leadership in learning, discovery, engagement, and economic development. This includes launching the Illinois Commitment, which provides free tuition and fees to qualified in-state undergraduates. The University provides strong undergraduate and graduate education programs; undertakes basic, translational, and applied research; and supports outreach, extension, continuing education, initiatives, and programs, as well as other public engagement activities to multiple communities.

Collaboration and innovation are hallmarks of the Illinois research enterprise—researchers are accustomed to working across disciplines, institutions, and international boundaries. The University's powerful reputation attracts extensive international partnerships that create opportunities for Illinois students and faculty to work with colleagues around the world.

National and Global Impact

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is a member of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the Association of American Universities, as well as the Big Ten Academic Alliance, which is governed by the provosts of the member universities.

Illinois is a recognized leader in national and international education. With an international student enrollment of over 12,000 in 2024-25, Illinois ranks second in the nation among public colleges and universities and includes students from over 120 countries. More than 1,600 students studied abroad in 2024-25, and around 300 programs are offered each year in 50 countries around the globe.

In 2024-25 the campus community included:

- ~37,000 undergraduate students
- ~21,000 graduate and professional students
- ~3,360 tenure system and specialized faculty members
- ~3,700 academic professionals
- ~6,100 civil service staff members

Comprehensive Academics

More than 37,000 undergraduate students are enrolled in 11 undergraduate colleges and divisions, which together offer courses in more than 150 fields of study. The campus enrolls approximately 21,000 graduate and professional students in more than 200 programs and is among the top universities in the number of earned doctorates awarded annually in the U.S.

Colleges and divisions enrolling undergraduate and graduate students include:

- College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
- College of Applied Health Sciences
- Gies College of Business
- College of Education
- The Grainger College of Engineering
- College of Fine and Applied Arts
- College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
- College of Media
- School of Information Sciences
- School of Social Work
- Division of Exploratory Studies

The following units offer programs leading to graduate or professional degrees:

- Carle Illinois College of Medicine
- College of Law
- College of Veterinary Medicine
- School of Labor and Employment Relations

The campus is highly regarded in accountancy, biochemistry, chemistry, engineering, information science, education, microbiology, and computer science. Additionally, it is nationally recognized for its strengths

in the arts and humanities, collaborative and interdisciplinary research culture, highly ranked professional schools, and one of the world's great libraries.

U.S. News & World Report's America's Best Colleges (2024-25) rated the Urbana-Champaign campus as 9th among public universities and 33rd among all national universities. In all of Illinois' current graduate and undergraduate rankings, there are 37 programs in the top five, 67 among the top 10 and 97 in the top 20. Illinois is delivering excellence on a massive scale.

World-Class Faculty, Distinguished Students, and Alumni

Among the campus's most significant resources are its talented faculty and students. Many faculty members are recognized for their exceptional scholarship, with memberships in the American Philosophical Society, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Inventors, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Academy of Education, and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. Faculty members at the University have won and received Nobel Prizes, Wolf Prizes, Pulitzer Prizes, MacArthur Fellowships, Guggenheim Fellowships, Fulbright Awards, the Crafoord Prize in Biosciences, Blavatnik Awards, the Japan Prize, the National Book Award, the National Medal of Science, the National Medal of Technology, and Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers, as well as awards from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Academy of Education, and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Each year, Illinois students receive some of the world's most prestigious scholarships, including Rhodes, Truman, Marshall, Gates, Goldwater, Churchill, Luce, and Fulbright Scholarships. Illinois has been named a top producer of Fulbright Students and Scholars, often ranking in the top 10 among public universities and top 25 among all universities. Another prime indicator of the University's excellence is the success of its alumni. The University boasts one of the world's largest, most diverse alumni communities in the U.S. and around the world. The Illinois alumni base includes 11 Nobel laureates, 26 winners of the Pulitzer Prize, and 212 Guggenheim Fellows.

Arts and Culture

A major center for the arts, Illinois attracts dozens of nationally and internationally renowned artists each year to its widely acclaimed Krannert Center for the Performing Arts. Designed by alumnus Max Abramovitz, an architect of New York City's Lincoln Center, the facility has four indoor theaters and an outdoor amphitheater. In the more than 50 years since its opening, the center has welcomed hundreds of thousands of patrons for more than 350 performances each year.

The University also supports two major museums: Krannert Art Museum and Spurlock Museum. A museum of world history and culture, Spurlock Museum holds approximately 50,000 artifacts from diverse cultures and varied historical time periods.

In addition to visual and performing arts, Illinois promotes cultural education through resources offered to the entire campus community. The Asian American Cultural Center, International Education, Japan House, La Casa Cultural Latina, Native American House, Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center,

Salaam Middle East and North African Cultural Center, Women’s Resources Center, Diversity and Social Justice Education, and Gender and Sexuality Resource Center provide opportunities to learn and experience the rich historic traditions and modern living cultures that shape our world.

LOCATION IN CHAMPAIGN-URBANA

While Champaign-Urbana is home to one of the world’s great public research universities, a vibrant arts and culture scene, an internationally diverse population, a strong technology base, and a commitment to societal issues make the area a destination for professionals of all kinds. The twin cities feature highly desirable attributes including top-notch restaurants, concert arenas, and parks and recreation facilities that are commonly found in larger cities.

Champaign-Urbana is consistently ranked as a great place to live and work, with an average commute time of just eight minutes. Combining natural Midwestern beauty with cultural resources typically found in larger metropolitan areas, the twin cities retain the charm, friendliness, safety, and affordability of smaller communities. Housing, entertainment, and living expenses are comparatively low. Easy commutes, a designated bike-friendly community, and an award-winning mass transit system (free with campus ID) make it quick and simple to get from here to there.

Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy 12,000 acres of community parks throughout the area and a wide variety of outdoor sports and activities such as swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, camping, biking, and cross-country skiing at one of the major forest preserves in Champaign County. Golfers enjoy a number of public golf courses within 15 miles of Champaign and three private clubs. The annual Illinois Marathon is a national event that brings together thousands of athletes, spectators, and volunteers for a weekend of races and activities.

Within a three-hour car ride to Chicago, St. Louis, or Indianapolis, individuals in the community can enjoy sporting events, world-class museums, or dinner at renowned restaurants. Amtrak and American Airlines offer daily transportation from Champaign, allowing ready access to almost anywhere in the world. As a community that makes it easy to balance work with family and leisure, it doesn’t take long for newcomers to realize that this community is a wonderful place to call home.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign would supersede any conflicting information in this document.