

Tulane University names David Harris as new Director of Athletics

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David Harris is the Green Wave's new Director of Athletics and the Ben Weiner Director of Athletics Chair.

Tulane University President Michael A. Fitts announced today the hiring of David Harris as the Green Wave's new Director of Athletics and the Ben Weiner Director of Athletics Chair. Harris, who was named an Athletics Director of the Year by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics in 2021, is currently Director of Athletics at the University of Northern Iowa. He will begin his new role at Tulane on January 3.

Harris, a native of Baton Rouge, will oversee an athletics program enjoying remarkable success both academically and across the 17 sports in which they compete. The university's athletic facilities are also undergoing major expansions and improvements while the Green Wave fan base is growing exponentially.

"Central to David's long and deep experience in collegiate athletics administration is his passion for the success of student-athletes, the value and integrity of competition and the importance of sports in uniting and inspiring students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff and fans," Fitts said. "At Tulane, David will oversee an incredibly talented and dedicated group of student-athletes, coaches, administrators and staff who have elevated our athletics program to a high point in its long and storied history. With this hire, the opportunities and potential are limitless."

With Harris' arrival in 2016, the University of Northern Iowa continued gaining national recognition for besting Power Five programs across all sports, winning 20 conference championships, having 17 "Coaches of the Year," 28 "Players of the Year" and earning 11 NCAA tournament bids. He has helped lead record-breaking fundraising efforts and facility development at UNI, including a major renovation of the UNI-Dome, the construction of a softball hitting facility, outdoor tennis courts, a football team meeting room, an outdoor football practice field and the replacement of the playing surfaces for football and basketball/volleyball.

Harris also holds leadership roles at the NCAA and on national committees related to general athletics oversight, academic enhancement, equity and diversity, student-athlete transfers and more. He is a current member of the NCAA's Division I Council, the NCAA's Council Coordination Committee and Chair of the NCAA's Women's Basketball Oversight Committee.

Under Harris' leadership, student-athletes have consistently maintained GPAs and graduation rates that exceed the overall student body.

"My career began supporting the academic pursuits of student-athletes and it has always been important to me to find a place that combines world-class academics with a pursuit of excellence in all of its athletic endeavors," Harris said. "President Fitts is committed to the well-being, academic achievement and lifelong success of Tulane's student-athletes and continuing to build an athletics program that matches the university's nationally renowned research and academics."

The attraction of returning home was also a big draw, Harris said. “I was born and raised in south Louisiana, so I know firsthand that the city of New Orleans is an amazing community. It is the right place for my wife Felicia, who is a native of Natchez, Mississippi, and I to continue to raise our family.”

Patrick Norton, Tulane’s senior vice president and chief operating officer, said Harris’ experience and enthusiasm for the AD position at Tulane were obvious from the start.

“During our athletic director search, David stood out for his exceptional vision for Tulane athletics and passionate desire to move our program forward to compete at the highest levels of intercollegiate athletics,” said Norton. “David’s extensive knowledge, experience and leadership will be invaluable to our athletics program and the development and success of our student-athletes.”

Harris will serve as a member of the university’s senior leadership team and will serve on the President’s Cabinet. The announcement of Harris’ hiring follows an extensive nationwide search led by Tulane Board Member Doug Hertz and a committee of board members, faculty, athletics staff, students and community members.

Over the past two years, Tulane teams have excelled in the arenas of sports competition and in the classroom. Several Green Wave programs posted extraordinary results and combined for four American Athletic Conference titles including football, women’s golf, baseball and women’s cross country. The nationally ranked Green Wave football team posted a remarkable 2023 Goodyear Cotton Bowl victory, and its sailing team won national championships in 2022 and 2023.

Student-athletes have been just as successful in the classroom, with 68% posting at least a 3.0 GPA, seven teams earning a perfect Academic Progress Rate, and the department achieving a Graduation Success Rate of 93%.

Tulane has also launched major enhancements to its athletic facilities through the recently announced [**"Investing in Excellence" campaign**](#). The campaign has supported a recent major upgrade of Tulane’s training facility in the Wilson Center, the installation of new turf in Yulman and Turchin stadiums and a new pool and other renovations to the natatorium. It will also fund continued renovation of the Wilson Center, a new sports performance facility, a multipurpose indoor practice facility, a new tennis complex and a new multipurpose headquarters for Tulane’s

varsity sailing program.

A press conference introducing Harris to the media will be held on Monday, Nov. 27 at 3 p.m. in the Jill H. and Avram A. Glazer Family Club. The conference will be **[livestreamed via Tulane Athletics YouTube.](#)**