

SETON HALL | LAW

Sports Law Symposium: Sports in Time of Change
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Peter E. Pilling

*Campbell Family Director of Intercollegiate Athletics &
Physical Education*

Columbia University

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Peter Pilling was introduced as Columbia University's Campbell Family Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and Physical Education in February 2015 after serving as vice president at IMG College for nine years. Pilling is Columbia's seventh athletic director since the position became full-time in 1931.

The 2022-23 academic year, Pilling enters his seventh full academic year at the helm of a Columbia Intercollegiate Athletics Department which features 31 varsity sports, serves more than 750 student-athletes, and boasts nearly 150 years of athletics tradition.

During Pilling's first six years at Columbia, the Lions have claimed six team national championships (2016 Fencing, 2016 Lightweight Rowing, 2017 Archery Compound, 2018 Men's Lightweight Rowing, 2018 Archery Compound, and 2019 Fencing), seven individual national championships (Jake Hoyle, 2016 men's fencing/foil; Omar Khalifa, 2017 men's squash; Bianca Gotuaco, 2017 archery; Iman Blow, 2018 women's fencing/foil; Sylvie Binder, 2019 women's fencing/foil and Anne Cebula, 2019 women's fencing/epee; Jackie Tang/Jack Lin, Fall 2019 ITA All-American in men's tennis), 18 Ivy League team championships, 62 individual conference or Ivy League titles, along with the 2016 CollegeInsider.com postseason basketball tournament championship. Columbia's football program has undergone a complete transformation as the Lions won 14 games over the 2017 and 2018 seasons to register back-to-back winning seasons for the first time since 1956.

Under Pilling's guidance, Columbia Athletics enjoyed a successful 2019-20 academic year, even though winter and spring sports seasons were cut short in March due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) health concerns. During the shortened year, Columbia captured an individual national title in men's tennis as Jackie Tang and Jack Lin teamed to win the fall ITA All-American National Championship in doubles and two Lions teams claimed Ivy League team championships (women's cross country and women's fencing). In addition, 17 total student-athletes earned All-America honors, two student-athletes were named the Ivy League Player or Performer of the Year/major award winner in their respective sports, eight student-athletes or groups combined to win individual or relay Ivy League titles, two coaches garnered Ivy League Coach of the Year honors, 15 individual student-athletes in four sports earned NCAA Division I individual championship appearances and eight teams earned top-25 national rankings during the 2019-20 academic year. A total of 22 student-athletes garnered First Team All-Ivy League honors.

During Pilling's tenure, Columbia student-athletes have also achieved at a high rate in the classroom as 294 student-athletes attained a perfect 4.0 term grade point average, 1,611 student-athletes earned Dean's List honors, and all student-athletes combined to earn an average cumulative 3.30-grade point average over that span. In addition, 98 percent of all graduating 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 student-athletes either secured employment, enrolled in graduate school, and/or completed training while securing employment with firms such as Goldman Sachs, Unilever, Morgan Stanley, MSNBC, JP Morgan Chase and Northwestern Mutual.

On the facilities front, Pilling oversaw and directed the creation of the Bubble at Baker, an air-supported structure that is placed over Rocco B. Commisso Soccer Stadium and enables Columbia student-athletes a much-needed indoor practice facility during the winter months of November through March. The Bubble at Baker opened in January 2017. Pilling has also overseen the development and evaluation process of revitalizing Dodge Fitness Center on Columbia's campus. In 2019, Columbia renamed the Levien Gymnasium basketball court after one of its most influential and supportive alums Jonathan D. Schiller. And in 2021, Columbia announced plans to build the multi-level Columbia Tennis Center featuring both indoor and outdoor courts and will house the Lions' nationally ranked men's and women's tennis programs.

In November 2016, he introduced a new branding and recruiting initiative #OnlyHere, which focuses on the assortment of advantages to the Columbia student-athlete. #OnlyHere emphasizes Columbia's extraordinary location in New York City, unparalleled academic and career opportunities, an elite-level athletic performance program, and a "built to win" foundation in facilities and personnel.

In June 2017, Pilling unveiled a new multimedia agreement with national marketing giants JMI Sports and IMG for Columbia Athletics, a contract that provides valuable national and international brand exposure and recognition to the University community and New York City, while also providing for an even greater experience for student-athletes. In July 2018, Columbia also unveiled a new and improved website, www.gocolumbiaions.com, hosted by SIDEARM Sports, a new digital ticketing platform powered by national leader Paciolan and a new online store featuring Columbia Athletics merchandise prepared by Dyehard Fan Supply.

Pilling's first year at Columbia also saw the hiring of head coaches for football (nine-time Ivy League champion Al Bagnoli), men's basketball (Jim Engles), and women's basketball (Megan Griffith). In his first five years at Columbia, he has also appointed a wrestling coach (Zach Tanelli), diving coach (Scott Donie), women's rowing coach (Emerson Curry), volleyball coach (Allison Keeley), field hockey coach (Katie DeSandis), and lacrosse coach (Anne Murray).

Before arriving in Morningside Heights, Pilling accumulated an avid sports management background, as he has previously served in leadership roles as Vice President at IMG College, senior associate athletics director at Brigham Young University, and associate athletics director at Villanova.

As Vice President at IMG College, the nation's largest collegiate sports marketing company, from 2006-15, Pilling built extensive administrative experience working with a variety of NCAA Division I athletics departments including Brigham Young, TCU, Baylor, Gonzaga, and the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Before his time at IMG College, Pilling worked at BYU where he was the Senior Associate Athletics Director managing athletic operations including finance, development, media relations, corporate sponsorships, marketing and promotions. He also served as the sports administrator for the men's and women's basketball, tennis, track and field, and swimming squads.

A former board member and past president of NACMA (National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators), Pilling has also served on the Board of Directors for NCLA (National Collegiate Licensing Association). In June 2001, he received the 2001 NACMA National Outstanding Individual Achievement Award.

A graduate of Brigham Young University with a bachelor's degree in accounting, Pilling continued his education at Ohio University, where he earned a Master's degree in Sports Administration. At both BYU and Villanova, Pilling served as an adjunct professor in the business department, where he taught a sports marketing course.

The Peter Pilling File

Date announced as Director of Athletics: February 3, 2015

Birthdate: July 20

Hometown: Los Alamitos, Calif.

Education

Master of Science-Sports Administration, Ohio University, 1990

Bachelor of Arts-Accounting, Brigham Young University, 1984

Career

Director of Intercollegiate Athletics and Physical Education, Columbia University, 2015-current

Vice President, IMG College, 2006-15

Senior Associate Athletics Director, Brigham Young University, 2002-06

Associate Athletics Director for External Operations, Villanova University, 1997-2002

Associate Athletics Director, St. Bonaventure, 1995-97

Associate Athletics Director, University of Wyoming

Assistant Athletics Director, Morehead State University

Noteworthy Awards/Administrative Committees (past and present)

Ivy League FCS Athletics Director representative

Ivy League Media Committee

Board of Directors for NCLA (National Collegiate Licensing Association), 1995-96

NACMA National Outstanding Individual Achievement Award, 2001

NCAA Peer Review Team

USTA Athletic Directors Advisory Committee

Big East Conference Public Relations/Marketing Committee

Big East Conference Tennis Championships Committee