



CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Prospectus

THE OPPORTUNITY



Position Title

Chief Development Officer,
McCombs School of Business



Location

Austin, Texas



Reports To

Dean, McCombs School of
Business



Website

www.mccombs.utexas.edu

POSITION SUMMARY

[The University of Texas at Austin](#) (UT Austin) seeks its next Chief Development Officer (CDO) for the [McCombs School of Business](#) (McCombs). Reporting directly to [Dean Bradley Staats](#), the CDO will serve as a key member of the McCombs leadership team and the school's senior advancement leader. The CDO will also work in close partnership with [Vice President for Development David Livingston](#) and colleagues across [Texas Development](#), the University's development office, to align McCombs' philanthropic priorities with the University's broader ambitions. The new CDO will elevate the school's overall fundraising, positioning McCombs as a national leader in business innovation, research, and education in one of the most vibrant and economically dynamic cities in the country.

The appointment of Dean Bradley Staats, effective July 1, 2026, marks a pivotal moment for McCombs and creates a rare opportunity to build on the school's remarkable momentum, deep alumni loyalty, and longstanding culture of excellence. This leadership transition coincides with the successful conclusion of the University's historic "What Starts Here" campaign in August 2026, creating a unique moment of renewal and opportunity for both the school and its advancement program. For its part in the campaign, McCombs exceeded \$100 million in annual fundraising in each of the past two years. Together, the new Dean and CDO will help shape the next era of philanthropic impact for McCombs, building on extraordinary institutional momentum and a rapidly evolving economic landscape.

McCombs enters this next era from a place of strength. The school recently raised more than \$175 million for Mulva Hall. Two academic departments have secured naming gifts of \$25 million or more, with additional naming opportunities still ahead. McCombs has also secured multiple gifts in the \$5 million to \$10 million range to support strategic initiatives and industry-focused programming. Notably, much of this success has been driven by a relatively small group of highly engaged donors, creating significant opportunities for future growth across the school's broad alumni and corporate network.

McCombs inspires exceptional pride among its graduates, faculty members, and supporters, an affinity reflected in the school's sustained fundraising success, highly engaged network of more than 110,000 alumni worldwide, and strong culture of mentorship, advocacy, and philanthropy across Texas and beyond.

At the same time, Austin and Texas are experiencing extraordinary economic and demographic growth. New wealth, venture capital, corporate headquarters, and industry leaders continue to relocate to the region, many eager to connect with the state's flagship university. This creates powerful opportunities for McCombs to deepen relationships and expand philanthropic support in areas central to the future economy, including artificial intelligence, healthcare, entrepreneurship, energy, finance, and technology.

With the support of President Jim Davis and Vice President for Development David Livingston, and on the strength of UT's second consecutive year exceeding \$1 billion in fundraising, the next McCombs CDO will enter an institution with uncommon ambition, momentum, and alignment. The role offers the opportunity to help shape transformational interdisciplinary initiatives, expand faculty-industry partnerships, deepen student experiential learning, and secure philanthropic investment that advances both McCombs and the broader mission of UT Austin.



EXPECTATIONS

The successful candidate will be an exceptional fundraiser and leader: collaborative, strategic, and externally engaged, with demonstrated success securing transformational gifts and cultivating high-level relationships with alumni, corporate leaders, and philanthropic partners. This individual will help mobilize the extraordinary strengths of McCombs' faculty members, advisory boards, alumni community, and University leadership to accelerate the school's philanthropic trajectory and extend its impact across Texas and around the world.

Leadership Profile: Traits and Competencies

- Collaborative leader who embraces and fosters a culture of partnership and engagement across departments, schools, and institutional stakeholders.
- Leads with initiative and a “get it done” mentality while maintaining collaboration and professionalism.
- Demonstrates strategic vision and the ability to translate ideas into action.
- Politically astute and highly skilled at navigating complex organizational environments, balancing multiple stakeholders, priorities, and perspectives with diplomacy and sound judgment.
- Demonstrates exceptional social skills and strategic discernment.
- Thinks and acts boldly while remaining pragmatic and grounded in institutional realities.
- Communicates with authenticity, empathy, and influence.
- Operates with integrity and aligns decisions with the mission and values of UT Austin.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Development Officer for the McCombs School of Business will report directly to Dean Bradley Staats and serve as a key member of the Dean's leadership team. As such, the CDO has significant college-level autonomy to set fundraising and engagement strategy with the Dean. In addition, the CDO will partner closely with Vice President David Livingston, other school and college CDOs, and colleagues in Texas Development to advance the school's philanthropic priorities and broader institutional goals.

As McCombs' senior advancement leader, the CDO will provide strategic vision and leadership for a comprehensive and ambitious fundraising program designed to secure transformative philanthropic support. This individual will drive engagement with alumni, corporate partners, and high-net-worth donors, while elevating the school's fundraising performance and long-term philanthropic trajectory.

The CDO will lead and inspire a high-performing advancement team of approximately 30 professionals and serve as a trusted adviser and strategic partner to the Dean and University leadership. McCombs is consistently one of the top three UT schools, colleges, and units for philanthropic revenue, averaging \$100 million annually during the past two years.

Primary Responsibilities

- As a member of the school's leadership team, serve as the CDO for the school and the voice of McCombs Development at school and University meetings and events, including the Dean's Advisory Council.
- Partner with school leadership and faculty members to maximize time and impact with school's top donors.
- Represent the school and University to build relationships with donors, prospects, and alumni.
- Manage a limited development portfolio of high-impact supporters, identify and solicit gifts, and conduct strategic prospect management meetings.
- Establish and lead the meeting of quantifiable goals, including successful major and principal gift solicitations.
- Lead and actively participate in all fundraising strategy sessions by providing professional insight and advice based on the depth and breadth of knowledge and experience.
- Collaborate with colleagues in Texas Development to further the fundraising efforts of the McCombs School of Business, while also creating and nurturing a culture of philanthropy within McCombs.
- Effectively determine and develop the priorities, strategy, and goals of McCombs' Development and External Relations (DER) team related to the school's priorities, University capital

campaigns, annual giving, principal and major gifts, donor engagement, and stewardship.

- Provide leadership, vision and direction for McCombs' DER team to drive improvements in strategy, planning, and operations, and to meet the Dean's strategic objectives. Prepare or oversee the preparation of reports and assessments.
- Create a robust and highly productive fundraising program, setting performance goals that hold team members accountable, and overseeing the DER budget.
- Serve as the primary liaison between the school and Texas Development, collaborating on prospect management, campaign planning, gift processing, donor relations, and stewardship to ensure alignment and a seamless donor experience.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Demonstrated success in fundraising, development, or advancement roles, securing high-impact gifts, preferably within a complex higher education setting.
- Proven track record individually soliciting and closing gifts at the \$10 million-plus level, with a history of raising such amounts annually.
- Experience leading and managing a team of development professionals with the tenacity and skill to drive results. Ideally, experience leading teams of 10 or more people.
- Ability to partner effectively with a Dean who is eager to grow as a fundraiser and strategic advancement leader.
- High degree of emotional intelligence. Excellent written and verbal communication skills. Exceptional interpersonal and relationship-building skills. Capable of working independently.
- Critical and innovative thinker. Ability to think creatively about fundraising approaches and donor engagement strategies.
- Strong commitment to ethical fundraising practices and adherence to relevant laws, regulations, and practices.
- Proficiency in using fundraising software and tools.
- Ability to travel domestically and internationally to engage prospects and donors. Successful candidate must live in or be willing to relocate to the Austin, Texas, metropolitan area.
- Bachelor's degree and at least 10 years of experience. Relevant education and experience may be substituted as appropriate.
- MBA or master's degree in higher education, public affairs, communication, organizational development, or another applicable field preferred.



LEADERSHIP

McCombs Dean Bradley Staats

[Bradley Staats](#) will become Dean of the McCombs School of Business on July 1, 2026, returning home to UT Austin and the city where he grew up. A third-generation Longhorn whose grandfather graduated from the business school in 1940, Staats brings nearly three decades of industry and academic leadership experience to one of the nation's leading business schools at a pivotal moment for Texas and higher education.

He joins McCombs from the University of North Carolina (UNC) Kenan-Flagler Business School, where he served as Ellison Distinguished Professor of Operations and senior associate dean for strategy and academics, overseeing program excellence across undergraduate, graduate, and MBA degrees. During his time at UNC, he helped lead major curricular innovation, digital transformation, and strategic growth initiatives across the school's educational portfolio. He earned a B.S. in electrical engineering and a B.A. in Plan II and Spanish from UT Austin, followed by an MBA and doctorate in technology and operations management from Harvard Business School. Early in his career, he worked at Goldman Sachs and in venture capital.

A scholar of operations management and organizational learning, Staats studies how individuals, teams, and organizations perform at their best, with applications spanning healthcare, technology, and service industries. He is the founding faculty director of UNC's Center for the Business of Health — an interdisciplinary initiative across UNC-Chapel Hill — and the author of "[Never Stop Learning: Stay Relevant, Reinvent Yourself, and Thrive](#)" by Harvard Business Review Press. His leadership has driven curricular innovation and digital transformation across multiple degree programs.

As Dean, Staats sees an opportunity for McCombs to build even more deeply on the strengths of Austin, Dallas, Houston, and the broader Texas economy. He believes Texas is uniquely positioned at the intersection of entrepreneurship, technology, healthcare, energy, and finance, and that McCombs can serve as a gateway connecting those industries to talent, research, and innovation across the United States and around the world.

Staats succeeds [Lillian Mills](#), who has served as Dean for McCombs since 2020.

"Returning to UT and to Austin, where I grew up, is deeply meaningful and inspiring to me," Staats said. "McCombs is already one of the world's outstanding business schools, thanks in no small part to Dean Mills' leadership, and this is a unique moment to build on that extraordinary foundation."



UT Austin Vice President for Development David Livingston

[David Livingston](#) has served as Vice President for Development at UT since 2023. A third-generation Longhorn, he has more than two decades of experience in Texas Development. He served most recently as Assistant Vice President for Individual Philanthropy, where he led presidential and principal gift strategies as well as the University's principal, major, and international gift teams.

Livingston has traveled extensively across Texas and around the world to help UT's alumni and friends align their philanthropic passions with support for the University's world-changing students, faculty members, and programs. He earned a bachelor's degree in history from UT. He and his wife, Sarah, reside in Austin with their two children, Will and Jane.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

The University of Texas at Austin is one of the nation's premier public universities — the top public university in Texas, the flagship of the University of Texas System, and the fifth-largest university in the country. Founded in 1883, UT Austin serves as the premier educational and research engine, with a community of 55,000 high-potential students, 4,600 accomplished faculty members, and award-winning programs across 18 colleges and schools, supported by a proud global alumni network of more than 550,000.

A bold and ambitious institution, UT Austin is recognized as one of the world's leading centers of academic excellence, with more than 76 programs ranked among the top 10 nationally and placed among the world's 40 best universities. The University is a national leader in energy, business, artificial intelligence, and national security, attracting more than \$1.14 billion for research in FY24. By virtue of its public mission, culture of innovation, location, size, and rich history, UT stands as one of the most influential universities in the world.

As Texas' leading research university, UT offers a place to explore limitless opportunities for tomorrow's artists, scientists, athletes, doctors, entrepreneurs, and engineers.

Exceptional minds come to the [Forty Acres](#) to experience a thriving hub of research, learning, and discovery at the highest level of excellence — all made possible by the generosity of supporters who believe in the power of UT Austin to change the world.

With more than \$1 billion raised during the past year alone, [Texas Development](#) ranks among the top fundraising enterprises in higher education.

Led by Vice President for Development David Livingston, Texas Development is a collaborative community of more than 500 fundraising professionals across the Forty Acres driven by a commitment to excellence — creating meaningful experiences for donors and building lasting partnerships with alumni and friends. Fueled by the passion and loyalty of Longhorn Nation, they advance the University's highest priorities and most ambitious endeavors.

“What Starts Here Changes the World”

The “What Starts Here” campaign launched as the most ambitious fundraising effort in the history of UT Austin and the state of Texas. Set to close in August 2026, the campaign is achieving record-breaking

investment from alumni, friends, and partners. Visit the [campaign impact website](#) to explore how this support is preparing leaders of the future to take on critical challenges and improve lives.

Looking ahead, UT will continue to focus on developing bold leaders, addressing the evolving needs of the community, discovering innovative solutions, and reimagining what is possible in healthcare, all in fulfillment of their promise: What starts here changes the world.

McCOMBS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The McCombs School of Business is a national leader in business education and research and a premier source of future business leaders and ideas transforming industry and society.

In a competitive business school landscape, McCombs is one of the few national leaders in both research and education — receiving the highest marks in nearly all the business specialty areas for undergraduates and graduates — as ranked by U.S. News & World Report. Its BBA and MBA programs are consistently ranked top 10 and top 20, respectively, alongside its accounting program, which is frequently ranked No. 1 in the country for undergraduate, master's, and Ph.D. programs. McCombs is recognized this year as No. 12 worldwide for faculty research by Financial Times and one of the country's top producers of Fortune 500 CEOs and CFOs, with a growing network of more than 400 corporate partners and more than 110,000 living alumni around the world.

Situated in Austin's growing entrepreneurial ecosystem with a strong legacy of connection to Texas' major industries, McCombs is a powerful economic engine for the state. As the region continues to see explosive growth — with more than 9,000 high-tech, semiconductor, energy, computer, and software companies, as well as quickly growing biosciences, defense, multimedia, film, music, and logistics and distribution industries — McCombs plays an invaluable role as a hub for research and partnerships, as well as an essential producer of talent for the thousands of companies that now call Austin home.

McCombs' size and quality make it one of the most influential business schools in the country. Each year, McCombs educates more than 6,000 undergraduate, MBA, MPA, and Ph.D. students. Approximately 10,000 professionals also participate in executive education programs held at McCombs' AT&T Hotel and Conference Center, other venues, and online. With a broad, diversified portfolio of programs and research areas, the school is composed of 140 faculty scholars and more than 200 professional instructors across six academic departments. In addition to teaching and developing McCombs students, these exceptional faculty members, renowned for their research, serve on editorial boards of top journals in their disciplines; lead McCombs' 24 centers and institutes focused on research, teaching, and corporate partnerships; and serve on boards as well as in part-time leadership roles in industry, including with Microsoft and Amazon, among others. Leveraging UT Austin's strengths across other academic units, McCombs is a leader in cross-disciplinary collaboration, notably building on significant new investments in medicine, engineering, and computer science.



LIVING AND WORKING IN AUSTIN, TEXAS

The University of Texas at Austin is proud to call the state of Texas and the city of [Austin](#) home. Austin remains a city on the rise, and UT is at the heart of its innovation ecosystem. The vibrant campus is both historic and state-of-the-art, steering thought leadership at the crossroads of technology, science, arts, business, healthcare, sports, and entertainment.

The connected community, the vitality and values of UT, and Austin's culture provide students and members of UT's faculty and staff with life-changing opportunities and an incredible place to work, live, and grow professionally and personally. The University benefits from strong relationships with the local government and community, building on the high quality of life that flows from the natural beauty of the Texas Hill Country, the creative pulse of the city, the entrepreneurial and high-tech character of the economy, its distinct culture of food (notably Tex-Mex and barbecue), music, art, and independent businesses.

Frequently ranked as one of the best places to live, Austin is the 12th largest city in the United States and among the fastest growing in the nation. UT Austin has played a vital role in the development of the city and state and has a unique opportunity to harness the phenomenal growth of Texas and Austin to create impact at an even larger scale.





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PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDACY

The University of Texas at Austin is partnering with [Meng Peeps](#), a boutique retained search firm dedicated to nonprofit institutions. We invite nominations and expressions of interest for the position of Chief Development Officer for the McCombs School of Business. Applicants will be requested to submit a detailed résumé/curriculum vitae and a letter of interest that highlight the applicant's personal vision and relevant leadership experience. To ensure full consideration, please direct inquiries, nominations, and applications via email to [Dana Trotter](#).

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