

Mount Mercy president endorses Gavin

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Mount Mercy President Laurie Hamen thinks Paul Gavin will do an excellent job as the new athletic director for the Mustangs.

"Paul's commitment to Mount Mercy and its student-athletes is unparalleled," Hamen stated Monday in a news release from the school. "His passion for the University and its mission will unite our campus and take us to extraordinary heights as we embark on a new era of Mustang athletics."

Gavin graduated from Mount Mercy in 1988 and earned a master's degree from Columbia Southern in 2006. He has been head men's basketball coach for 23 seasons and head men's golf coach for 19 years, but will relinquish all coaching duties when he officially assumes the new role on Nov. 1.

Women's basketball coach Aaron Jennings will take over the men's basketball program on a permanent basis, while current women's assistant coach Bob Kintzel will be interim head coach of the women's squad. A search for a head women's basketball coach will commence in the spring.

Additionally, a search for a part-time head men's golf coach will begin soon with a goal of identifying the next head coach by mid-December. The 20th-ranked Mount Mercy men's golf team wrapped up its fall season last week.

"I'm excited about Paul's ideas and leadership potential as we take the athletic department to even higher levels of achievement in academics, athletic competition, leadership, development and service," said Robert Callahan, vice president for enrollment and student services.

With a record of 387-329, Gavin is the winningest men's basketball coach in school history and ranked 14th on the NAIA's active coaching list heading into the 2015-16 season. He was a five-time conference coach of the year, led the Mustangs to three NAIA Division II national tournaments and two conference championships.

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In golf, Gavin was a two-time conference coach of the year and guided the Mustangs to a pair of league titles.

"It's an honor to be named director of athletics at Mount Mercy and I can't wait to get started," Gavin said. "My sincere thanks to President Hamen, Vice President Rob Callahan, the search committee and the entire Mount Mercy community for their trust and confidence in me. I look forward to building upon our great history and tradition."

Jennings, a 2003 graduate of Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., was a member of the Mount Mercy men's basketball coaching staff for four years before taking over the women's program in 2008. He went 138-90 in seven seasons and took the Mustangs to the quarterfinals of the 2012 NAIA Division II national tournament.

Kintzel is a 1986 Mount Mercy graduate and was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame in 1992 after an award-winning career with the men's basketball team. He joined the women's basketball coaching staff prior to the 2014-15 season after two seasons as an assistant coach at Cornell College. Prior to that, he went 102-19 in five seasons as head coach at Mount Vernon High School, leading them to the 2010 Iowa Class 2A state championship.

The Metro Sports Report broke the news about the Mount Mercy appointments Saturday night.