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Campus Welcomes New Assistant Athletic Director for Development

Isabella Purnadi, Staff Reporter

Seattle University Athletic Director Shaney Fink recently hired Al Grigsby as the new Assistant Athletic Director for Development. As a former collegiate athlete, he understands the positive impact that sports can have on young people.

Grigsby joined the Seattle U Athletic Department in his current role for the basketball team last September 2021. He helped coach his son, Riley Grigsby and the rest of the men's basketball team to a historic 2021-22 campaign. The Redhawks finished the season 23-9, capturing their first Western Athletic Conference regular-season title.

"Initially, I was not interested. However, my family reminded me how coaching makes me happy, so when the offer at Seattle U came up, I knew that this was an opportunity many people don't get, so I took the leap," Grigsby said.

Basketball has always been part of Grigsby's life, as he played college basketball for six seasons at the University of California, Berkeley from 1991-97. Afterwards, he pursued a professional career in Japan for five years before retiring. Before coaching at Seattle U, Grigsby coached several collegiate basketball teams, including the women's team at Mission College and the men's team at Gavilan College.

Shaney Fink, the director of athletics at Seattle U, explained what Grigsby will be doing in his new role.

"The primary role of the Assistant Athletic Director for Development is a combination of raising revenue from corporate partnerships and Seattle U donors," Fink said. "Additionally, this position is part of a four-person team dedicated to student-athlete alumni engagement and support for Seattle U's 20 athletic programs."

During his break from college athletics, Grigsby worked as a sales and business executive at BIO-VED Pharmaceutical firm. His business and athletic background made him the perfect candidate out of a pool of 75 applicants.

"When seeking strong candidates for this role, we typically seek frontline [sales, business development and/or fundraising experience] as well as a strong understanding of the collegiate athletics landscape," Fink said.

Chris Victor, Seattle U Men's Head Basketball Coach, is thrilled for Grigsby but will miss his coaching next season.

"Grigsby will definitely be missed in the basketball offices, but I am most excited about the positive impact he is going to make on the department and university," Victor wrote to The Spectator.



Jordie Simpson

Al Grigsby, Assistant Athletic Director for Development, outside of the SU O'Brien Center.

Fink believes that the combination of Grigsby's frontline and athletic experience will amplify the Seattle U brand.

"Grigsby has the skills, experience and understanding of college athletics required to succeed in this critical role," Fink said. "He is a results-driven leader, with experience in sales, strategy and execution. He is organized and thoughtful in his approach and has been well-received by our campus community and greater Seattle sports community."

Grigsby looks forward to helping benefit the athletic department in a different way and supporting both revenue and non-revenue sports.

"When the role was first discussed with me, I liked the idea of contributing to athletics on a much broader scale that didn't include just one sport. I was excited to be part of something where I could have a positive impact within the overall athletics department," Grigsby said.

As someone who considers himself a people-person, Grigsby looks forward to connecting with potential financial supporters inside and outside of the Seattle U Community.

"I am looking forward to connecting with the donors and getting to know their stories because it helps me understand how they feel about the department" Grigsby said. "When I was younger, I was reserved and quiet—and I still am at times—but having worked in athletics helped me learn to be honest and upfront, which has helped me develop great relationships in coaching and in business."

As Grigsby transitions into his new role, he hopes to help Seattle U Athletics become a department that is known for their long-term success across all sports.