

Executive Director, The Garage Northwestern University

Position: Executive Director

Organization: The Garage

Location: Evanston, IL

Reporting Relationship: Office of the Provost, Associate Provost for Innovation and New Ventures

Website: <https://thegarage.northwestern.edu/>

THE OPPORTUNITY

Northwestern University seeks a dynamic and visionary Executive Director to drive an exciting next chapter for The Garage, putting bold ideas into action and fostering the evolution of student entrepreneurship on campus. Strategically positioned under the umbrella of the Provost's Office, the next Executive Director will bolster The Garage as an intellectual nexus within Northwestern for holistic interdisciplinary student experiences and education. The Garage's focus is on equipping and inspiring billion-dollar people, not necessarily billion-dollar companies.

The next leader will inherit a driven team of 6, a strong operational foundation, and extensive network for raising funds to underwrite ongoing and new programs. With a strong mandate to uphold the quality of each student's learning experience and enhance organizational innovation, the successful candidate will create a plan for continued programmatic development and financial support. This individual will develop short- and long-term goals and metrics for The Garage's next chapter. By embracing emerging trends and innovation around entrepreneurship, workforce, and technology, the definition of success for The Garage lies in its ability to develop critical thinkers and inspire young entrepreneurs. Through engagement with the broader Chicago entrepreneurship ecosystem, alums of The Garage and Northwestern broadly, and thought leaders in entrepreneurship education, The Garage will continue to provide a distinctive and inspiring experience for students while enhancing and amplifying its external reputation.

THE GARAGE OVERVIEW

The Garage at Northwestern University is an interdisciplinary innovation and entrepreneurship space and community for Northwestern students. Since its inception in 2015, The Garage has offered students unique opportunities to build the knowledge, grit, and network needed to bring new ideas to life. Serving over 3,400 students annually, The Garage brings together bright minds from across all corners of campus, creating a lively culture that is diverse, welcoming, and wildly experimental. Based on student engagement surveys, The Garage is a top distinguishing experience during a student's time at the university. The 11,000 square foot space, carved out of the North Campus parking structure and designed by the world-renowned Gensler architectural firm, has been home to more than 1,000 student-founded startups and projects.

Leveraging an initial multimillion-dollar joint commitment by Northwestern University and members of its Board of Trustees, which included the buildout of its celebrated space, The Garage has continually exceeded expectations in providing unique student experiences that would not have otherwise been possible. In addition to enhancing educational opportunity, The Garage has also expanded Northwestern's culture and reputation in innovation and entrepreneurship specifically. In fact, it has been studied and emulated by several universities across the United States. The success of The Garage stems from a culture of individuals who prioritize student education above all else and represent the core values of having trust in oneself, taking initiative, and understanding the importance of community.

Currently, The Garage has 10 impactful programs focused on startup incubation, student development, and funding opportunities. All programs at The Garage are designed to allow students to explore entrepreneurship and gain the community needed to succeed. To increase the visibility and accessibility of that community, The Garage established a presence in San Francisco, which provides programming, resources, and support for founders, operators, and investors, including those in the Northwestern network of alumni, as well.

WHAT YOU'LL DO:

The Executive Director of The Garage reports to the Associate Provost for Innovation and New Ventures. The Executive Director will lead The Garage as the hub of student entrepreneurship at Northwestern University. This position will ensure all fiscal, operations, fundraising, marketing, human resource, technology, and programmatic strategies are effectively implemented. The Executive Director will also provide guidance, network, and leadership in all aspects of entrepreneurship for residents of The Garage.

Key Responsibilities

- Motivate and inspire residents of The Garage and maintain a culture that prioritizes student education.
- Drive long-term planning, define metrics and goals, and manage programmatic and operational performance of The Garage.
- Increase collaboration across the University with respect to student entrepreneurship, as well as maintain strong relationships with and build connections among school-based academic centers including the Farley Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation (McCormick School of Engineering), the Donald Pritzker Entrepreneurship Law Center (Pritzker School of Law), and the Levy Institute for Entrepreneurial Practice (Kellogg School of Management).
- Embrace and maintain a team environment that is creative, impact-oriented, generative, and highly-collaborative within and across Northwestern communities.
- Foster a culture of trust and collegiality that fully embraces values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Enhance the organizational value of The Garage as it continues to scale and serve more aspiring entrepreneurs.
- Seek opportunities to enhance program offerings and increase capacity of the organization by building and leveraging the alumni network.
- Evaluate potential ventures generated by students at The Garage.
- Provide strategic leadership that will determine specific programs that will integrate Northwestern's innovative strengths.
- Maintain and further develop relationships with marketing units housed in schools and centrally within Northwestern.
- Serve as a chief ambassador and fundraiser by cultivating relationships and forging new and innovative strategic partnerships/alliances across the business, venture, and entrepreneurship landscape within Chicago and beyond.
- Leverage a compelling narrative to build a network of external partners and supporters who are advocates for the students of The Garage to advance the organization's opportunities, increase its reputation, and enhance students' networks.
- Ensure that The Garage achieves even greater prominence as a pioneering leader in the startup ecosystem and entrepreneurial education.
- Increase network engagement to enrich the experience of The Garage's program

participants and alumni to attract more prospective students and partners.

WHO YOU ARE:

The Executive Director will be a visionary leader with a genuine passion for the mission of The Garage, cultivating and championing the process of entrepreneurship for the benefit of its students. The ideal candidate will likely possess cross-sector experience, whether serving as a founder, entrepreneur, investor, strategy consultant, business leader, or nonprofit executive within a start-up or growth-oriented environment. This individual will be an innovative leader with experience running operations, building strategic partnerships, and managing diverse internal and external stakeholders. Strong candidates may include market-savvy leaders highly regarded in their industry and seeking to leverage professional experiences and networks to enrich the early entrepreneurial endeavors of students involved with The Garage.

Ideal experience and qualifications include:

- Proven senior executive experience in positions working with an early-stage startup or high-growth organization, building, scaling, and running an innovative nonprofit, business, or social enterprise.
- Demonstrated experience building strategic plans and metrics coupled with an agility to pivot to meet student needs.
- Experience and passion serving as a coach and mentor; high comfort levels with giving constructive feedback and patience for the learning process.
- Demonstrated success building positive, effective, and collaborative cultures and representative teams that embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Superior communication skills and the ability to collaborate with faculty, students, and external entrepreneurs.
- Strong analytical and strategic capabilities demonstrated through proven results bringing ideas or products to a market.
- Track record of building, driving, and managing teams and influencing the broader constituents to work in concert toward common goals and objectives; understands what motivates different people.
- Sensitivity to academic environments demonstrating the ability to influence and positively grow initiatives with professors and administrators across various units of the University.
- Experience balancing diverse perspectives of multi-stakeholders with the ability to build trust across all levels of the institution and to gain buy-in.
- Experience raising funds to support ongoing and new programs.
- Ability to understand, communicate, and position a broad variety of innovations that address market needs across an array of industries and sectors with services, technology, or physical goods.
- Motivating and high energy, but not a showcase individual.
- Strong interpersonal skills; approachable and empathetic.
- Ability to discern intent of partners and set boundaries.
- Impeccable character and integrity.

EDUCATION

An undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university is required.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

Candidates should provide a resume/curriculum vitae and a letter of interest. All nominations and applications will be held in the strictest confidence. At your earliest convenience, please share your nominations and/or applications with Dayna Keene at dayna.keene@kornferry.com

Northwestern University is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer of all protected classes, including veterans and individuals with disabilities. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply.