Kirkwood softball coach Joe Yegge is leaving the Eagles after 11 years to become the associate head coach at DePaul University in Chicago.

"Yes, that is true," Kirkwood sophomore Lauren Kuch said Thursday afternoon. "He just told us this morning."

Yegge compiled a 537-112 record with the Eagles, including a 49-13 mark this past season. He led Kirkwood to eight ICCAC conference titles and six trips to the NJCAA Division II World Series.

The Eagles finished 49-13 this season and reached the World Series in Mississippi.

Tracie Adix-Zins was named DePaul's new head coach on July 5. She was an All-American pitcher for the Blue Demons during her playing days. DePaul is an NCAA Division I school that competes in the Big East Conference.

Yegge held a meeting in his office Thursday morning with four of his current players to let them know he was leaving. Other players participated in the meeting by speaker phone.

"Honestly, I was a little bit surprised," said Kuch. "He's always wanted to go somewhere big, and this is a great opportunity for him."

Kuch played for Yegge at Cedar Rapids Prairie for five years before joining him at Kirkwood for this past season. Yegge stepped aside as Prairie's head coach after the 2017 campaign.

"Obviously I've played for him for a long time and I've enjoyed playing for him," said Kuch, an All-American outfielder for the Eagles.

Yegge was an assistant coach at Indiana State before coming to Kirkwood. He also has been the head coach at NIACC. Yegge and his wife, Amy, have two sons, Wyatt and Canon.

Kirkwood athletic director Doug Wagemester knew Yegge had been talking to DePaul, but Wagemester is currently on vacation in Nevada and had not received official notice that his softball coach was leaving as of early Thursday afternoon.

"The last time I talked to him, it was very probable," said Wagemester. "There have been talks. He's going down that road, I think."

Yegge coached numerous All-Americans at Kirkwood. Taylor Nearad of Kirkwood was the National Junior College Player of the Year in 2016 and 2017, and DoniRae Mayhew won the honor this season.

Yegge could not be immediately reached for comment.