Garrison Forest School, a private, independent girls’ school for grades K-12 in Baltimore County, Maryland, with a coed preschool and national and international boarding program, is seeking a strategic and experienced Assistant Head for Finance and Operations. The next Assistant Head for Finance and Operations will oversee all aspects of the School’s finances and operations, working closely with the Head of School, Board of Trustees, and senior leadership. S/he must also forge strong relationships with the School community, including assessing roles and abilities of the Business Office staff and identify any gaps in service to the mission of the school.

Situated on a stunning 110-acre campus minutes from downtown Baltimore in the gracious suburb of Owings Mills, Garrison Forest School (GFS) offers a rich, whole-child, college-preparatory education that empowers students to realize their full potential and live lives of purpose. The next Assistant Head for Finance and Operations will find a strong, solid school poised for continued growth and success with an unwavering commitment to providing excellent educational opportunities for girls.

Mission
At Garrison Forest School, we prepare our students in and out of the classroom to thrive in a complex, changing world by:

• challenging them to strive for academic excellence and to grow into informed, independent, and creative thinkers
• cultivating an authentic and resilient sense of self, grounded in respect and integrity
• creating a diverse and inclusive community built on a spirit of caring
• inspiring young women to lead and to serve with passion, purpose, and joy

School History
Garrison Forest School was founded in 1910 by Mary Moncrieffe Livingston, a teacher with a vision for a school focused on educating children and young women “To Be Rather Than To Seem,” the school’s Latin motto. Since that time, Garrison Forest has continued Livingston’s original commitment to academic rigor infused with exceptional character-building, and the result is more than a century of excellence, empowerment, and growth.

Recent Garrison Forest history includes the addition of the international boarding program in the early ’90s, the beginning of GFS’s partnership with Johns Hopkins in the early 2000’s, and the establishment of the James Center: Programs and Partnerships with a Public Purpose in 2008.

Lila Lohr ’63, one of the country’s most respected independent school leaders, returned to her alma mater as the Interim Head of School for the 2017-2018 school year after Dr. Kim Roberts announced her plan to leave Garrison Forest School in February 2017. The Board of Trustees
recently announced that Christopher “Chris” A. Hughes will join the school as the 12th Head of Garrison Forest in July 2018. Chris is currently in his 10th year as Upper School Principal at St. Paul Academy and Summit School in St. Paul, Minnesota. A gifted educator and administrator with a deep background in independent schools and significant experience in girls’ education, Chris possesses the qualities needed to move Garrison Forest forward into its next phase.

**THE SCHOOL**

Garrison Forest School is an independent school with an all-girls day and boarding program and coeducational preschool. Faculty explain that “there is no typical Garrison girl;” instead, the school provides an environment in which each individual takes risks, gains confidence, and follows her own interests. Of the 572 students in total, 34 percent identify as students of color and 12 percent are international students, making for a diverse and global community. The boarding program, for 76 students in grades 8-12, offers girls the support of a strong faculty, staff, and student community coupled with the challenge of independent living in preparation for a successful transition to college life.

Passionate teachers are at the core of the Garrison Forest experience. Seventy-six percent of faculty hold advanced degrees and 34 percent have served 10 years or more at GFS; for three years in a row, the School was named among the Baltimore Sun’s “Best Places to Work.” A student-faculty ratio of 7.6 to 1 allows for relationship-building and support, and the single-gender environment helps girls thrive, discovering their authentic selves and using their voices with confidence and power. The first word students and faculty use to describe GFS is “community;” a school where student-faculty relationships are central to learning, where individuals feel well-supported, and where collaboration thrives.

GFS provides over $4 million per year in financial assistance for over 40% of its students and their families. It is accredited by both AIMS and the Middle States Association. Endowment stands at $41 million.
ACADEMICS

The rigorous and challenging academic experience at Garrison Forest centers on the ideal of “knowledge that sticks: habits of heart and mind that stay with students long into the future.” At every grade level, teachers work to build enduring skills such as perseverance, creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and curiosity in order to give students the tools they need to succeed in college and in life. Students appreciate the meaningful relationships they are able to forge with teachers, and students know that faculty genuinely want them to succeed. Teachers speak of the growth mindset they have for students and are serious about the holistic preparation of a next generation of women leaders. Faculty are committed to the GFS mission and believe “our intention to serve the girls anchors us.”

Rather than simply providing instruction, teachers at Garrison Forest seek to contextualize learning, helping students delve into deeper questions and make connections across disciplines. Garrison Forest has a commitment to STEAM curriculum in conjunction with other signature program through the James Center; the school aims to foster girls’ knowledge and competence, empowering students to excel in science, technology, engineering, arts/design, and math through Imagineering and the Creative Co-Op makerspace. Girls are encouraged to take risks, and the incorporation of choice in learning for all ages cultivates students’ engagement and investment in each lesson and activity.

PRESCHOOL

Preschool at Garrison Forest is the foundation of building life-long learners. Students cultivate a love of learning through exploration, collaboration, and curiosity, establishing a strong foundation for future academic growth. The co-educational program provides a supportive environment for children ages 2, 3, 4, and 5, with a range of schedules designed to suit the needs of families. Being part of the larger GFS community provides preschoolers with unique opportunities, including access to the
greater campus and its resources and chances for interaction with older students. Preschoolers at GFS are exposed to language arts, math, science, music, art, Spanish, and the library, as well as Imagineering, an inquiry-based engineering and design curriculum. Physical education classes support the development of body awareness, coordination, and motor skills.

**LOWER SCHOOL**

The academic program in the Lower School is defined by a spirit of inquiry, cooperation, and enthusiasm for learning. Garrison Forest puts girls at the center of every aspect of the school experience, empowering students to embrace their potential in every subject, from reading and math to science and the arts. Across the Lower School curriculum, enrichment is balanced with a focus on building foundational knowledge and cultivating 21st-century skills such as collaboration and creativity. As students move through the elementary grades, their learning progresses from concrete, multi-sensory experiences to abstract thinking and critical problem solving. In the fourth and fifth grades, girls delve into technology, with a laptop program and annual STEAM week, during which students learn coding and apply their knowledge in a programming challenge.

Learning in the Lower School is further enriched by a strong community: twice weekly Morning Meetings allow the grades to come together for activities focused on respect, multicultural education, public speaking, and more, while the Reading Buddies and Big and Little Sister activities offer opportunities for peer-to-peer bonding and leadership. Thanks to small class sizes and expert faculty, teachers know students’ learning needs and passions. Various grouping models for reading and math provide each student with an appropriate blend of support and challenge, and a full-time Academic Resources Coordinator allows for smaller reading groups and individualized support where needed. Lower School students contrast GFS with their previous schools appreciating that “here making mistakes helps you learn.”
Middle School

Middle School at GFS offers academic challenges in a nurturing environment focused on helping girls find success. The program is intentionally designed to offer a breadth of curricular and co-curricular opportunities. Core academic disciplines include math, English, science, and history which are fully complemented by the visual and performing arts, digital thinking, modern and classical languages and decision making. All of the Middle School courses emphasize skill-building inquiry and critical and creative thinking as teachers work in unison to develop interdisciplinary experiences, such as Signature Projects in each grade level.

Across grade levels, the curriculum works to “fuel and catalyze” girls’ interests through a wide variety of courses and activities. An element of student choice allows girls to explore their passions and discover new interests: the one-week “mini-mester” offers an opportunity to delve into a new topic and grade 8 electives include mural making, design engineering, filmmaking, debate club, art club, and robotics. All Middle Schoolers participate in a comprehensive wellness program focused on relationship-building, decision-making, and topics in health, and the GFS advisory program creates safe spaces for girls to take risks with the support of caring faculty members. Throughout the Middle School, teachers are passionate about getting to know each student, offering encouragement and feedback. An Upper School Academic Mentoring program matches Upper and Middle School students for tutoring and homework help, and a dedicated Middle School Academic Resource Coordinator ensures that all students are challenged and accommodated in their learning needs.
**Upper School**

The Upper School is the culmination of the Garrison Forest student experience, offering girls the opportunity to pursue a rich program of core and elective courses and become leaders in the school community. A range of Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) offerings allow for challenge and intellectual risk-taking. STEAM continues to be an area of strength throughout the Upper School. One-hundred percent of students take four years of mathematics and 93 percent take four years of science, including AP courses in biology, chemistry, and environmental science. The programs in French, Latin, and Spanish, and Chinese all extend through the AP level, and many Latin students supplement their learning with a modern language as well.

Across the curriculum, the Upper School offers opportunities for girls to find and discover their passions, whether that means taking computer electives such as robotics, programming, or documentary filmmaking; working with guest choreographers in advanced dance classes; or participating in the Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) program, Garrison Forest’s groundbreaking partnership with Johns Hopkins University. WISE allows students to work on cutting-edge research with professors and graduate students (many of these students have gone on to major in the sciences). As one senior expressed, “at first we are given lots of opportunities – then we are taught to seek them out.” The GFS Independent Senior Project, the first of its kind among Baltimore independent schools, requires students to complete a two-week professional internship at the end of senior year, gaining hands-on experience and insight into post-college career choice. The school is also one of only six high schools nationwide piloting the new Small World Initiative (SWI) course, a Yale University-founded crowdsourcing effort to discover new antibiotics to help stop the spread of superbugs.
ARTS AND ATHLETICS

From preschool through grade 12, arts are an integral component of the Garrison Forest experience. The school’s historically robust fine arts program includes visual arts courses in drawing, film, painting, photography, sculpture, and design and performing arts courses in dance, theater arts, musical theater, chorus and chamber choir, band, and musical technology. The fall production of “The Language Archive” won best play in the 2017 Baltimore Theatre Awards. In the Upper School, all freshmen take an innovative, interdisciplinary music, theater, and design class. Advanced Placement courses are offered in both art history and studio art.

The GFS athletic program begins with physical education; as students move into the Middle and Upper School, girls have the opportunity to join one of 50 teams in 16 sports, including badminton, cross country, field hockey, lacrosse, riding, polo, golf, indoor/outdoor/winter soccer, tennis, basketball, softball, squash, volleyball, and track. GFS has top-ranking teams in field hockey, polo, and badminton. This year’s lacrosse team ranked in the top 25 nationally. GFS is also further distinguished by its riding and polo programs, and the campus features both a superb equestrian center and an indoor polo ring. By competing as Grizzlies, GFS girls develop a sense of self-esteem, sportsmanship, teamwork, leadership, and cooperation that prepare them to meet challenges on the field and off.

SCHOOL LIFE

Life at Garrison Forest is enriched by school spirit and long-standing traditions, such as the yearlong competition between the two spirit teams: “Lights” (Light Blue) and “Darks” (Dark Blue). Spirit days provide an opportunity for girls to dress up in support of their teams; the daily student uniform is
another nod to GFS history, as well as a means of keeping the focus on learning during the school day. Students describe being drawn to GFS by the spirit and joy they found on campus, and by how welcomed they felt. They recount that once on campus, they also felt such strong support from teachers and from other students, and learned to appreciate how “there were new things waiting for us with every new year of school.”

Co-curricular activities are a key feature of the GFS program, from clubs in the Middle and Upper School Student Forum, which provides opportunities for student leadership. Community service has been a part of the Garrison Forest experience since World War I, when GFS girls volunteered to shuck corn while farmers went to the front. Today, students participate in community service projects in areas such as the environment, education, and health. The student-led Service League involves all Upper School students in service to the Baltimore area and beyond, and the Elsie Foster Jenkins ’53 Fellowship Program gives Upper Schoolers the opportunity to pursue independent service learning projects. As a complement to the all-girls environment, boys from nearby schools are often included in service activities and social events, from mixers to STEM days to the annual Upper School spring musical.

Diversity is an integral part of the ethos of GFS, with numerous cultural and affinity groups such as Sisters in Unity, a group for Middle School students of color, and Black, Asian, and Jewish Students Associations for both students and faculty. Programming throughout the school year is focused on building cultural competency. The Dialogue Across Difference program hosts and trains faculty and students to host community conversations on the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and more. For the last several years, the Power of Women (POW!) speaker series has brought accomplished, innovative women leaders across an array of career fields to Garrison Forest to inspire students’ career aspirations and prepare them for a lifetime of leadership.
BOARDING PROGRAM

Boarding students have been a part of the Garrison Forest since the school’s founding, and today 74 national and international boarders call GFS their home away from home. Garrison Forest offers short-term and long-term boarding opportunities for students from near and far. Fifty percent of boarding students come to GFS from outside the United States.

Residential Life at Garrison Forest provides students with opportunities to develop compassion, self-confidence, and a sense of independence that will serve them well as they transition to the college environment. GFS boarding students forge friendships, build relationships with dorm families, and take part in authentic cultural exchange as part of a truly international community. Robust weekend programming provides opportunities for fun and enrichment, and seasonal activities, movie trips, and museum visits are open to both day and boarding students, allowing for the creation of cohesive bonds. Nineteen faculty, all of whom reside on campus, participate in the residential program.

PHYSICAL CAMPUS

Garrison Forest School is located on 110 exquisite acres in the suburbs outside the city of Baltimore. The campus is a beautiful property featuring paths, woods, fields, and pasture. Campus facilities include five academic buildings, the McLennan Library, a performing arts center, dining hall, and a 400-seat theater. A state-of-the-art gym, two grass and two turf playing fields, softball field, tennis courts, and two age-appropriate playgrounds offer ample space for athletics and outdoor play. The architecture of the campus comprises a mix of both historic buildings, purposefully renovated to accommodate teaching and learning, and newer purpose-built construction, such as the LEED-certified Middle School. Three dorms provide student and faculty housing, and Lochinvar, the hilltop castle-like home located on the north side of the campus, serves as the residence for the Head of School.
Owings Mills and Baltimore

Owings Mills, Maryland, is an inner suburb of the city of Baltimore. Located at the northern terminus of the metro, the town enjoys a large population of families and young professionals. Because of its lively community and small-business benefits, CNN Money named Owings Mills in the top 50 on its list of “Best Places to Live and Launch.” Less than a half hour drive from Johns Hopkins University and the cultural opportunities of downtown Baltimore, Owings Mills offers a relaxed lifestyle in close proximity to the city. Owings Mills is served by the Baltimore County Public School District, and is also home to other independent schools.

Baltimore is a city marked by a vibrant downtown and Inner Harbor area, ethnic neighborhoods, and regal boulevards designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. It has a distinguished academic and intellectual history, major league and Division I sports teams, a thriving cultural community, and beautiful natural resources. Cultural life is enriched by museums, orchestras, and theaters, including the Baltimore Museum of Art, Walters Art Museum, American Visionary Arts Museum, and Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African-American History, the Baltimore Symphony, and Center Stage. Sports fans support the Orioles, the Ravens, the Preakness, and numerous college (and high school) lacrosse teams. The urban area is anchored by the port and the Harbor. A short drive leads to farms, the Chesapeake Bay, Eastern Shore beaches, the Appalachian Mountains, and Washington, D.C.

Opportunities and Challenges

The new Assistant Head for Finance and Operations will join the Head-elect, Chris Hughes, in writing the next chapter for this venerable institution. The current Interim Head, Lila Lohr, is an alumna and former Board member, and she has done a wonderful job instilling optimism and renewed vigor in the staff, as well as reaching out to the larger school community. The successful candidate will succeed a long-standing Assistant Head for Finance and Operations who received high marks from constituents.
for his warmth, compassion, fairness, and communication skills. The remaining Business Office staff of five, including the interim Assistant Head for Finance and Operations, is a tight-knit crew, but as a whole relatively new to Garrison Forest. In addition to the Business Office, the Assistant Head for Finance and Operations oversees Facilities (including maintenance, housekeeping, and security), External Programs, Food Service, the Polo program, and the D & J Smith Equestrian Center.

The main challenge for the School going forward centers around enrollment, which, while stable, is down from its historic high in 2008-2009. While efforts are underway to address this issue, the next financial leader will need to model budgets for scenarios related to enrollment levels in each division. A component of the effort will focus on the Lower School, and more specifically, how to find the sweet spot between price and value to encourage families to engage with the School earlier and longer in their child’s educational journey. Increasing the yield of families opting to continue on to the Lower School after attending the highly successful preschool program is a primary goal.

The boarding program is also a key focus, as plans are in process to build an additional dormitory on campus that will increase the number of residential students to 100, roughly a third of the Upper School enrollment. The boarding program is healthy, in part bolstered by a foreign student population. The School would like to maintain the delicate balance between domestic and international boarding students while also growing the number of boarders it serves in total. Other construction related work will include a renovation of the Upper School, an effort to remain competitive in recruiting and retaining day students.

Additionally, the next Assistant Head for Finance and Operations will need to plan and prioritize a deferred maintenance schedule that thoughtfully and methodically addresses the physical plant issues that are part and parcel of an historic, 110-acre campus, including the equestrian facilities.

Finally, the new Assistant Head for Finance and Operations will be encouraged to bring fresh ideas on a whole host of issues, including tuition pricing, financial aid, and internal policies and controls that allow for increased transparency related to budgeting, forecasting, and long-term viability questions.

**Responsibilities of the Assistant Head for Finance and Operations**

In addition to embracing Garrison Forest’s mission, supporting its Head and leadership, and representing the School at professional and public forums, the new Assistant Head for Finance and Operations has a number of primary responsibilities:

- Oversee all financial reporting, including the development and approval of the annual operating budget, periodic reports of operating results compared to the budget, and bank covenant compliance. Audiences for financial information include the Board of Trustees, the Finance Committee, the Financial Sustainability Committee, the Building and Grounds Committee, and the Head of School, as well as other administrators and internal departments, lenders, and other authorities.
- Oversee the administration of the School’s endowment; execute endowment and investment policy; implement investment decisions of the Investment Committee; and coordinate with the endowment consultants, investment managers, and custodians, ensuring effective endowment allocations, performance, and reporting.
- Oversee School operations including personnel, maintenance, equestrian center, and food service.
- Serve as chief staff liaison to the Finance, Audit, Investment, Financial Sustainability, Building and Grounds, and Human Resources committees of the Board of Trustees, working closely with Committee chairs and organizing agendas and meeting materials and presenting at meetings.
Negotiate with lenders when necessary to ensure that funding is secured for new construction or other needs of the School and ensure compliance with loan terms.

Ensure that the School is in compliance with all local and state reporting requirements.

Build and/or maintain the School’s short- and long-term strategic financial models.

Coordinate with the Director of Facilities the oversight of the physical plant, grounds, and construction functions; help plan and direct all replacements and renewals of the physical plant.

Publicly represent the School in a positive and proactive way, collaborating with other School administrators, neighbors, and public officials.

Provide sound and consistent employment policies, adequate staffing levels, compensation, and appropriate benefits programs for all facets of school operations.

Help implement and administer all employee benefit programs including health insurance, retirement, worker’s compensation, life insurance, and other related plans.

Collaborate with the Head of School and other senior administrators on providing leadership regarding employee hiring, termination, compensation, and management.

Oversee the annual financial and 403b plan audits and filings of tax returns.

Provide transparent financial reporting and planning that builds trust among administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumnae, parents, and trustees.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND QUALITIES OF THE ASSISTANT HEAD FOR FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

The School is most interested in candidates who demonstrate the following qualities and qualifications:

- Bachelor’s degree required; MBA preferred.
- 10-plus years of financial and business leadership in a non-profit or for-profit organization(s).
- Experience on senior administrative teams and working with non-profit Boards.
- Demonstrated experience in measuring and improving organization-wide productivity.
- Demonstrated experience in the development of analysis for strategic decision-making, such as key cost drivers, competitive analysis, market analysis, organizational strengths and weaknesses, etc.
- Demonstrated ability to take complex subjects, distill them, and then communicate them to varied audiences.
- Experience in human resource management, employee benefits (including pension plans), and payroll procedures.
- Experience managing building projects.

In addition, the School hopes to find candidates who embody the following personal qualities:

- Ability to thrive in a dynamic environment.
- Ability to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to new ideas and initiatives.
- Ability to self-manage and manage complex projects.
- Ability to think strategically about both finances and larger School concerns.
- Ability to balance and prioritize the needs of the School.
- Ability to manage and mentor staff, and be a respected, active member of the School and community.
- Superb communication skills; excellent written, verbal, and presentation skills.
- A confident team player.
- Committed to equity and inclusion practices.
- Evident integrity.
To Apply

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position
- A current résumé
- A one-page statement of educational philosophy and leadership practice
- A list of five (5) professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will be contacted only with prior candidate approval) to:

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