HOLY CROSS SCHOOL
New Orleans, Louisiana

HEADMASTER
Start Date: July 2022
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OVERVIEW

For more than 170 years, Holy Cross School has served the New Orleans community as the premier college preparatory school for young men. Serving boys in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade, Holy Cross has provided academic, extracurricular, and spiritual experiences within a brotherhood of support that have inspired generations of students to grow from “Boys to Men.”

The educational philosophy of Holy Cross School is to develop the whole man – mind and heart, body and soul. The curriculum is innovative, putting an emphasis on cooperation, creativity, and adaptability and challenging each student to reach his fullest potential and realize his own inner genius. Sponsored by the Congregation of Holy Cross, the school is a prominent member of this distinguished network of 23 academic institutions in the U.S. including University of Notre Dame. As with all institutions within the Holy Cross network, the school is steeped in a Catholic tradition designed to help students be spirituality centered, develop their intellectual abilities, strengthen their emotional and physical maturity, and understand the Christian truth of each person’s relationship to others.

Holy Cross School seeks a dynamic and faith-filled leader as its next Headmaster starting July 2022. Currently, Eric DesOrmeaux, a long time, respected leader and alumnus of the school, is serving in the dual capacity as principal and Interim Headmaster while the Board of Directors searches for its next leader. The successful candidate will be an experienced educational leader devoted to the school’s mission and programs. The Headmaster is responsible for the overall vision, leadership, and management of the school and reports to the school’s Board of Directors. The Board seeks a relational and visionary servant leader to take the school to its next chapter of excellence. This is an exceptional opportunity to lead a forward-thinking school with deep ties to its community and an unwavering commitment to its Catholic identity and Holy Cross mission.

Mission

Holy Cross School is an independent, Catholic, college preparatory school founded in 1849 by the Congregation of Holy Cross to educate young men in the greater New Orleans community. Holy Cross is fully approved by the Louisiana State Department of Education and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as a college preparatory school for boys in grades PK-12.
SCHOOL HISTORY

Holy Cross High School traces its history to 1837, when Blessed Father Basil Moreau founded the Congregation of Holy Cross. In 1849, at the invitation of the Archbishop of New Orleans, five brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross were sent by Father Moreau to assume responsibility for St. Mary’s Orphanage. During the early years, the orphanage and the city suffered hardships, but the Congregation persevered. In 1879, as the need for an orphanage diminished, St. Isidore’s College, a boarding and day school was opened. This became the original site on which Holy Cross School stood and it is here that the school’s history officially began.

In 1890, the General Assembly of the state of Louisiana chartered the institution, empowering it to confer bachelor’s and master’s degrees. In 1895, St. Isidore’s College was renamed and solemnly dedicated Holy Cross College. Expansion of the facilities soon became imperative to accommodate the steady increase of students. At approximately the same time, though chartered as a college, the school became a secondary institution. In 1972, the boarding program was discontinued and the middle school opened.

After the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, in 2007 Holy Cross entered a new chapter in her long, rich history. In order to continue the mission of Holy Cross in the New Orleans area, the brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross and the Board of Directors selected a site in Gentilly to relocate the campus. In March 2011, Holy Cross School dedicated a 20-acre campus at the new location, and in 2015, the school opened a primary campus on Elysian Fields, adding a program for boys in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade.
Today, the school’s legacy is summed up by its motto: “Become the Man You Are.” To meet this challenge, the faculty has committed itself to creating a sequential curriculum delivered in an atmosphere of encouragement and support. More than half of the school’s young men are students of legacy, having followed a great-grandfather, grandfather, or father to Holy Cross. This legacy is embodied in the school code “The Holy Cross Man” and quoted from memory by Holy Cross men young and old.

Recited by students at the beginning of each school day, “The Holy Cross Man” is a rich tradition that defines who the community is and what Holy Cross School is all about. As the statement goes, “In a word, he is a man of faith and honesty, of strength of character through self-mastery, of respect for the Christian family and lawful authority, of leadership in the pursuit of the true, the good and the beautiful – that is the Holy Cross Man.”

The school’s students’ backgrounds and interests are as diverse as the neighborhoods from which they come, but all Holy Cross students share a 170-year-old tradition, an unquenchable spirit, and an enduring brotherhood. Boys become men by learning how to take responsibility, to treat others and themselves with respect, and to make tough decisions and to stand behind them.

Holy Cross educators have a special connection through its network school, the University of Notre Dame. Educators at Holy Cross have been trained through the McGrath Institute, learning about the complimentary nature of faith and reason, science and religion. The faculty members, many of whom are Holy Cross graduates, are committed to the school’s mission of educating the whole man, and they treat each student as an individual so they can help each young man realize his God-given gifts and talents.
ACADEMICS

A Holy Cross education focuses on challenging each student to reach his fullest potential and realize his own inner genius. Across all grades, students are surrounded with the best teachers and the best tools for success. Faculty and staff work closely with each student to deliver a challenging academic program while developing responsible young men who will become future servant leaders. The curriculum is innovative and project-based, putting an emphasis on cooperation, creativity, and adaptability.

Primary School (PK-Grade 4)
The primary grades focus on nourishing children’s appetites for knowledge and spirit of discovery, while building mutual respect and sensitivity. The school’s long history of Catholic education combines with the Reggio Emilia-style approach to enrich the learning experience.

The early childhood program (Pre-K - grade 1) offers a project-inspired environment, with the child as the central focus. Learning happens as students encounter challenges and are inspired by the classroom and their classmates. The lower school (grades 2-4) curriculum augments core subjects with STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) activities. Students are equipped to manipulate and build their own experiments. The answers are waiting for each boy to discover in his own way.
Middle School (Grades 5-7)

At this level, the school offers a balanced curriculum based on the needs of young adolescents. While teachers challenge students to meet their academic goals, they are also mindful of an adolescent’s developmental needs. The curriculum emphasizes both process and product, knowledge and application. Middle school is a time for students to gain independence. This is also a time of exploration to develop their skills and talents.

High School (8-12)

The Holy Cross high school provides a world-class, college-preparatory curriculum that provides a strong foundation for college success. The broad curriculum offers honors, Advanced Placement, and Dual-Enrollment courses to qualified students, as well as a Scholars Program focused on a classical education inclusive of a research and Capstone component. Focus areas include fine arts (visual, instrumental, choral, drama), STEM, robotics, engineering, speech and debate, and classical studies in addition to the state mandated curriculum.

A dedicated college counselor works with each student to deliver a personalized plan for college and life after graduation. Together with teachers and parents, students seek out the best opportunities for college scholarships and opportunities that will match their needs and interests.

COLLEGE MATRICULATION

Among the top institutions of higher learning Holy Cross graduates have attended in the past 3 years are:

Harvard University
Louisiana State University
University of Notre Dame
University of Alabama
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
Old Dominion
Louisiana Tech University
Florida State University
Loyola, New Orleans
Tulane University
US Military Academy (West Point)
US Naval Academy (Annapolis)
Xavier University
Texas A & M University

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THE ARTS

Fine arts programs build confidence and creativity and promote the development of the whole person. Students have the opportunity to explore visual arts, music, chorus, and theater throughout their Holy Cross education. Primary students experience movement, imaginative play, story creation, art projects, singing, and scene performance. Moving into middle and high school brings the opportunity to participate in advanced classes, performing groups, and theatrical productions.

Within the performing arts at Holy Cross, choral music is a curricular subject at Holy Cross. Classes focus on music performance, music analysis, and music literacy. Choirs present four concerts per year and perform in the community.

The Holy Cross Band is known throughout the South, and students annually receive college scholarships for their musical talent. The band plays at football games, participates in competitions, camps, and rallies, and marches in Mardi Gras parades. Students meet the instruments in fifth grade and explore until they find the instrument that is a perfect fit for their talent. In high school they may take two to four years of classes working up to Advanced Band Honors and AP Theory.

High School students in drama classes draw, sing, play instruments, build scenery, paint, and, of course, act. Students may take two to four years of drama. At least two plays are produced annually, and the students compete in district and state rallies.

In visual arts, middle school includes hands-on opportunities that allow students to push their creative limits. Students at the high school level may choose to study art for two to four years, exhibit their works in shows and competitions, and join the National Art Honor Society or the Art Club. AP Studio Art is also available.
Faith and formation of servant leaders is the cornerstone of a Holy Cross education. Students participate in school-wide liturgies, grade-level retreats, and. In addition, they have opportunities to become peer ministers, attend leadership retreats, perform mission work, and serve in liturgies as readers, altar servers, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

The school is committed to serve its community and society through its actions. Holy Cross has a service requirement designed to help students become an active part of the legacy of Holy Cross. Services provides the opportunity for each student to experience different types of service with a variety of disadvantaged individuals in order to assist in clarifying each student’s particular gifts and talents. Students in grade 8 must fulfill 10 hours of service; students in grades 9-12 complete 25 hours each year.

Clubs and activities provide students with opportunities to explore their passions, develop self-confidence, and make friends. Students in middle and high school can join a variety of clubs, groups, and teams, including Art Club, Academic Games, French and Spanish Club, Robotics, Student Council, National Honor Society, and Debate Team. Several clubs are open to all grades, including Chess Club, Pokémon Club, and Holy Cross Center Stage.

Holy Cross School has a strong tradition of athletic programs that build confidence and character while engaging in a wide variety of sports. The middle school athletic program includes both competitive and intramural teams, which allows students to participate at any level. Many high school athletes have gone on to successful college and professional athletic careers.
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

Nicknamed “Crescent City” and “The Big Easy,” New Orleans is known for its round-the-clock entertainment, vibrant live-music scene, and singular cuisine — reflecting its history as a melting pot of French, African, and American cultures.

With around 400,000 residents, the New Orleans is a thriving community and the most populous city in Louisiana. The city serves as a major port on the Gulf of Mexico, a world-favorite tourist destination, and a center for higher learning with more than 50,000 students enrolled in the region’s 11 two- and four-year institutions. Tulane University, a top-50 research university, is located in the Uptown district.

As a place to live, New Orleans is attractive for its lively culture, eclectic architecture, restaurants, and institutions of higher education. Residents will also tell you that New Orleans is rich in Southern hospitality — a place of closely connected neighborhoods where people embrace the best of the city’s history and unique culture and take care of each other.
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

As mentioned earlier in this document, Holy Cross School has been a valued resource to the Greater New Orleans community for more than 130 years. In recent years the school has experienced some leadership turnover that has caused concern among its loyal constituents. The brand remains immensely strong, and the school’s legacy is rich in tradition and abundantly deep in family loyalty. This is an exceptional opportunity for a proven leader with passion for the Holy Cross mission and Catholic identity of the school to lead a timely renewal initiative and introduce a bold new plan for the school.

Among the key challenges and opportunities the new Headmaster will encounter are:

- Enrollment has suffered as a result of a number of factors, including the pandemic. Rebuilding enrollment is a top priority and can be accomplished in several ways including:
  - Revitalizing the school’s branding, marketing and external image;
  - Creating and executing a plan to communicate the many positive attributes and student successes to external audiences;
  - Increasing alumni engagement both as sources of student referrals and also to recapture the palpable sense of pride many feel for the school;
  - Empowering current families to actively share the wonderful “Tiger Story” with friends who might be considering the school for their son(s).

  
  Note that increasing enrollment has a domino effect on many other opportunities that require critical mass in order to be successful. There is every reason to believe that the enrollment potential is there; it just needs leadership and a plan to achieve that potential.

- Assuring that the academic program of the school meets the needs of all students, with particular emphasis on increasing challenge and rigor, and consistent quality across the entire program;
- Uniting the school and building morale with a common sense of purpose and community, both hampered by the disengagement forced by the pandemic;
- The school’s facilities have always been a great strength and need to be maintained and enhanced to sustain that competitive advantage;
- As with any good school, it is ongoing work to maximize fundraising income to support the operations and program of the school, as well as capital investments.
DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Although the title of this position is “Headmaster”, the school functions in a somewhat modified version of the President/Principal Model. As mentioned earlier in this document, a strong, experienced principal is in place who will report to the next HOS. The principal is responsible for day-to-day academic operations, which frees up the HOS to serve as the more outward facing “institution builder” – the fundraiser, friend raiser, vision-setter, and overall face of the school to the community. To achieve the promise of this bifurcated leadership structure, the HOS and principal must work effectively as a team, collaborating and partnering to achieve synergies and responding seamlessly to the changing needs of the institution.

This is a classic “take it to the next level” leadership opportunity. Recent turnover at the HOS position has placed a premium on a leader who can engender confidence and trust and bring people together around the powerful mission and core values of the school. The board does not seek a radical change agent or disrupter but a generative and visionary servant leader who will respect the past, honor the values and traditions of the school, and build on the solid institutional platform in place.

Given the current challenges and opportunities mentioned above, the next Headmaster should possess the following qualities and qualifications:

- A faith-filled practicing Catholic who will embrace and promote the Catholic and Holy Cross identity of the school while modeling those values in his/her daily practice.
- A person who can engage in collaborative dialogue with and maintain a positive, ongoing relationship with the leadership team, Board of Directors, and the Brothers of Holy Cross who take seriously the role of oversight over their sponsored schools.
• A fundamentally relational leader who will connect joyfully and genuinely with all constituents of the school, especially the extensive alumni network which has felt somewhat neglected in recent years.
• A high-profile leader with exceptional communications and platform skills who can raise the profile and powerful value proposition of the school in the community. New Orleans is a very competitive Catholic school market. The ability to articulate the competitive differences including the distinct qualities of the student experience at Holy Cross will be a top priority for the next HOS.
• A team builder and mentor who will recognize the critical role of all faculty and staff and celebrate their achievements in fulfilling the vital mission of the school.

The board welcome candidates from varied mission-critical career platforms including other Catholic, independent, or charter schools; higher education; non-profit foundations, associations, charities, and the like; as well as the corporate, civic, and professional services arenas. While deep domain knowledge of secondary education is preferred, other qualities and experiences are also greatly valued, especially visionary, entrepreneurial leadership and the ability to inspire, build a high performing team, and create demand for the unique gifts of a Holy Cross School education.

This is an extraordinary and truly rare leadership opportunity.
TO APPLY
Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultants in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A one-page statement of educational philosophy and practice;
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission) to:

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