WESTMINSTER SCHOOL
SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT
DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
JULY 2018
westminster-school.org
The Position

Westminster School, a coeducational boarding and day school for students in grades 9-12 and postgraduate located in Simsbury, Connecticut, seeks a Director of Admissions and Enrollment Management (DOA) starting in July of 2018.

Westminster has an excellent reputation, an outstanding faculty and curriculum, a solid history of balanced budgets, a well-maintained physical plant, a talented administrative staff, a committed Board of Trustees, supportive parents and alumni, and more recently, record numbers in admissions and fund-raising. The School has the facilities and resources to provide a truly exceptional education to its students and a marvelous instructional environment for faculty. Admission to Westminster, already competitive, should remain so, and after 20 years of the same leadership in the admissions office, opportunities exist for the next DOA to enhance the School’s approaches and strategies in identifying, recruiting, and admitting mission-compatible students and families.

The new DOA will report directly to the Head of School, Bill Philip, and be a member of the School’s leadership team. The successful candidate will inherit a healthy and competitive admissions’ situation. Twenty-six percent of the 1,046 applicants were offered admission last year and approximately 42% accepted. Approximately 30% of students receive financial assistance from an aid budget of $5.1 million, and all financial aid is awarded on the basis of need. The average financial assistance award, including grants and loans, is more than $44,000.

Students come from 26 states and 23 countries, and 19% are U.S. students of color. About 16% of students require a visa in order to matriculate. Day students from the greater Hartford area make up 30% of the enrollment, and a small number of students are postgraduates. Slightly more than half of the student body is male.

Very generous campus housing is included along with a highly competitive salary and tuition remission. Simsbury, with a population of 23,000, lies just 30 minutes northwest of Hartford, surrounded by hills and country lanes, and was named in 2015 as one of America’s 10 best towns in which to live.

Mission Statement

The Westminster community inspires young men and women of promise to cultivate a passion for learning, explore and develop diverse talents in a balanced program, to reach well beyond the ordinary, to live with intelligence and character, and to commit to a life of service beyond self.
School History

Originally begun as a boys’ school, Westminster School was founded in 1888 in Dobbs Ferry, New York, by Yale alumnus, William Lee Cushing. Cushing’s belief in traditional English boarding school education was heavily influenced by the Reverend Edward Thring, headmaster of Uppingham School in England, and his formula for education, and his approach earned endorsements from many influential American families who sent their sons to the school.

In 1900, as enrollment increased, Cushing moved the school to its current location in Simsbury. The new hilltop site of the school offered more than 230 acres of land, views of the Farmington River, and train service for students to New York and Boston.

Cushing served as headmaster until his death in 1921, leaving behind his educational philosophy and inspiring the School’s motto, virtute et numine, (“by human righteousness and Divine grace”) which is translated liberally as “Grit and Grace.”

As Westminster approached its 100th year, the School underwent significant milestones first by welcoming day students in the early 1970s—setting the precedent for the active recruitment of minority students—and then by admitting female day students in 1972. Female boarders followed in 1977. At the time of its centennial in 1988, the School saw significant enhancements to the arts program with the completion of the Werner Centennial Center, named for its long-serving sixth headmaster, Donald H. Werner.

Since its founding, Westminster School has been committed to providing a challenging yet supportive experience for all students. Its core values—community, character, balance, and involvement—and its commitment to excellence form the lifeblood of the School. Members of the community know
these values, strive to make them a part of their lives, and celebrate them through traditions. Alumni value both the lessons and the experiences from their years on the Hill and speak of the School with both fondness and respect.

**THE SCHOOL**

Westminster School enjoys a reputation as one of the finest college-preparatory schools and one of the top small independent boarding schools in the country. The academic program, grounded in the liberal arts tradition, prepares students and PGs for academic success and the rigors of college, while cultivating in them a lifetime love of learning.

The School’s close-knit community of 95 faculty members and 393 boarding and day students (70% boarding) share a sense of belonging and a common sense of purpose.

Westminster School’s motto, Grit and Grace, defines and distinguishes the Westminster experience. Grit characterizes the effort students make to meet high expectations for academic work, athletics, and community service. Grace speaks to the way students negotiate these responsibilities with generosity of spirit, good manners, and respect for all. The unique combination of “grit” and “grace” makes Westminster students successful, not only at the school but also later in life. In recent years, approximately 90% of students gained admission to schools in the “most” or “highly” selected categories of Barron’s Profiles of Colleges and Universities.

Faculty are fully engaged in community life as teachers, coaches, advisors, dorm parents, program directors, role models, and friends. They are committed to the education of the whole person.
Students and alumni repeatedly mention the strength of the student/teacher relationship as the outstanding characteristic of their experience at the School. Seventy percent of faculty members hold advanced degrees, and the average number of years in education is 18. Because nearly 85% of the faculty live on campus, many with their families, students and teachers come together in countless settings and faculty quickly become a major presence in students’ lives. Faculty enjoy both a strong sense of community and purpose as well as the resources to excel as professionals nourished in a setting where they and their families also thrive.

The School is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and holds memberships with National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS), Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), National Network of Schools in Partnership (NNSP), Center for Spiritual and Ethical Education (CSEE), The National Employment Minority Network (NEMNET), School Year Abroad (SYA), S.P.H.E.R.E. Consortium, W.A.L.K.S. Consortium, and Founders League.

**College Placement**

The following is a selection of the colleges and universities to which members of the Class of 2016 matriculated:

- Amherst College
- Boston College
- Boston University
- Bowdoin College
- Brown University
- Bucknell University
- Colby College
- Colgate University
- Colorado College
- Connecticut College
- Denison University
- Dickinson College
- Duke University
- Elon University
- Georgetown University
- Ithaca College
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Middlebury College
- Princeton University
- Providence College
- Rollins College
- Skidmore College
- St. Lawrence University
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong
- The George Washington University
- Trinity College
- Tufts University
- Union College
- Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Spain
- University of Connecticut
- University of Denver
- University of Michigan
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Richmond
- University of Vermont
- University of Virginia
- Vanderbilt University
- Wake Forest University
- Washington and Lee University
- Wellesley College
- Williams College
- Xavier University
- Yale University
Academics

Academic excellence is at the forefront of the Westminster experience. The School's rigorous liberal arts and sciences academic program is comparable to those offered at much larger schools and includes 23 Advanced Placement (AP) classes; a teacher to student ratio of 6:1; and honors, elective, and independent study courses. This robust curriculum encourages and inspires students to take risks, follow their interests, and become lifelong learners. The School is known for its small class sizes, allowing teachers to provide individual attention to each student. Easy access to teachers for one-on-one interaction builds a culture of caring that remains at the heart of Westminster’s mission.

Advising is part of Westminster’s overall emphasis on individual attention. The advisor system ensures each student receives guidance and support from a faculty member dedicated to that student. New students have advisors assigned to them, and returning students can choose their advisor; some students will stay with the same advisor for four years, forming a strong bond, while others change advisors every year, preferring different perspectives and relationships with several faculty members. Students and advisors meet at least once each week, discussing class performance, mediating conflict, facilitating growing independence, and conversing on a number of topics and issues.

Core courses of English, mathematics, world language, history, science, and the visual and performing arts have specific graduation requirements. Students are encouraged to pursue subjects to the highest level possible beyond graduation requirements, and to establish the best background in core subjects as their talents and interests allow, while determining any special requirements of the colleges and college programs they choose. Placement in AP courses requires departmental permission and an average of 85 or above in the course preceding.

Students may choose to study abroad during their Fifth Form or Sixth Form years. Many students are
accepted by the prestigious School Year Abroad program and experience yearlong study and travel in China, France, Italy, or Spain. Available to students in the year following graduation, the equally respected English Speaking Union allows a year of study and travel in the United Kingdom.

The College Counseling Office serves to guide students through the full college admission process with the goal of helping students find a school that is “the right fit.” Dedicated and experienced counselors, coupled with the support of the faculty and an impressive office facility, guide students through the decision-making process. Serving as advocates for students, the counselors interface with admissions officers of colleges and universities on a regular basis and provide individualized counsel and support in order to find that best-fit school.

ARTS AND ATHLETICS

The visual and performing arts are alive at Westminster, with a range of opportunities available for every interest. From joining a student-organized a cappella group, to planning choreography or music for a Chapel presentation, to contributing to the literary magazine, students are free to explore their artistic talents and try new experiences. Art classes offer introductory courses through AP levels, covering topics including drawing and painting, mixed media and 3-D design, photography, and engineering and design. Students interested in music have the opportunity to perform as a member of band or choir performance ensembles or as a soloist, refining their art in private lessons or in the classroom with accomplished instructors.

Theater has always been an integral part of the Westminster experience, dating to when Headmaster Cushing’s son wrote and directed productions each winter before becoming a Broadway producer. The theatre program at the School offers students the opportunity to experience all aspects of theatrical
performance and production both in the classroom and in live productions. Three productions are staged each year: one dramatic, one musical, and one student-directed performance which offers advanced students the chance to direct. Opportunities for student involvement, both onstage and behind the scenes, are plentiful.

The School’s highly respected and robust athletic program includes 14 varsity teams for both boys and girls, participating in the highly competitive Founders League. With multiple levels of competition offered in each sport, all students have the opportunity to represent Westminster in interscholastic athletics. Teams consistently achieve excellent records, even though they compete against teams from much larger schools.

A student tradition, dating as far back as the 1920s, is stickball, a game in which teams made up of dormitory floors and day student teams compete in a baseball-like game on the quad and athletic fields in late spring. Each floor makes its own bat, usually a hockey or lacrosse stick that has been cut, or a wooden dowel of a large diameter. Generally the stickball "season" will culminate in a single-elimination tournament to crown the Hill Stickball Champion.

**Campus Life**

All Westminster students participate in a daily afternoon program. From the playing field to the stage, they are active in programs that bring balance, enjoyment, and competition to their lives. While the emphasis is on athletics, the afternoon commitment can include drama, stagecraft, dance, community service, or an independent study project.

With more than 30 student organizations to choose from, students also enjoy outstanding opportunities
to volunteer in the community, to pursue special interests, to try new activities, to show school spirit, and to realize their leadership potential among their peers. Westminster School is a place where scholarship, citizenship, sportsmanship, and leadership thrive.

**Physical Campus**

The School’s sports and recreation facilities include 35 acres of playing fields, 14 tennis courts, a 400-meter synthetic track, Kohn Squash Pavilion with eight international and four American squash courts, an indoor hockey rink, new baseball and softball fields, indoor basketball courts, and lighted paddle tennis courts. The Sherwin Health and Athletic Center, completed in 2003, houses an eight-lane 25-yard swimming and diving pool, a well-equipped fitness room, and a professionally staffed health center.

In 1996, Walter E. Edge Jr., a member of the Class of 1935, bequeathed $30 million, the largest benefaction to the School in its history, allowing for, among other things, the construction of Edge House which was designed by Westminster alumnus and award-winning architect Graham Gund.

The Armour Academic Center, which opened in the fall of 2009, is an 85,000-square-foot building that houses the English, Language, History, Math, and Science departments and a two-story library. Other features of the building include a centrally located atrium, classrooms and laboratories, a 120-seat lecture hall, a planetarium, faculty and administrative offices, and a variety of lounge spaces. The building is LEED gold certified by the U.S. Green Building Council. In the fall of 2017, the school will open a stunning new dining hall, another dormitory, and two faculty carriage house residences. A new student center will open in early 2018.
Simsbury, Connecticut

Simsbury is located approximately 12 miles north of Hartford, Connecticut. The city has been named to the 2015 list of Money magazine’s 50 best small cities in the country, which the magazine defines as places with “great jobs, strong economies, affordable homes, excellent schools, and that special something that makes it a great place to live.” While Simsbury has experienced development in the past few decades, the town government has been sensitive to maintaining the rural environment and historic charm that makes Simsbury the quintessential New England community. The town center is quaint and features a beautiful library, numerous restaurants, and a large park that offers concerts in the summer and community activities all year long.

Simsbury boasts a highly recognized educational system. In 2016, Simsbury High School was ranked the fourth best high school in the state by Niche and ninth by U.S. News & World Report. The town also houses multiple private schools in addition to Westminster including The Ethel Walker School, The Master’s School, St. Mary’s Elementary School, and The Cobb Montessori School.

Resting in the northern end of the Farmington Valley, Simsbury is a favorite spot for outdoor enthusiasts. The east side is flanked by Talcott Mountain, part of the Metacomet Ridge, a mountainous trap rock ridgeline that stretches from Long Island Sound to nearly the Vermont border. Notable features of the Metacomet Ridge include Heublein Tower, Talcott Mountain State Park, Penwood State Park, and the Tariffville Gorge of the Farmington River. The 51-mile-long Metacomet Trail traverses the ridge. At the western foot of the mountain, near the Farmington River, grows the Pinchot Sycamore, the largest tree in Connecticut.

Simsbury is roughly equidistant from both New York City (around 90 miles) and Boston, Massachusetts (around 90 miles). The town is often considered a bedroom community for the nearby city of Hartford,
a 35- to 40-minute drive from Simsbury center, however, many residents also commute to other towns and cities within the west-central Connecticut region. It’s also a short drive from Bradley International Airport.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

While the status and measures of enrollment at Westminster appear robust by all measures, the School takes the position of always striving to do more to enhance the quality and character of its student body. As with all independent schools, boarding and day, Westminster is in constant pursuit of full-paying domestic students while balancing that objective by fostering diversity and providing opportunity. With its enrollment strength, the School has the opportunity to reflect on its unique mission and its service to students and deliver consistent messaging centered on its core values of community, character, balance, and involvement.

Westminster’s steady enrollment picture and elevated reputation are not accidental achievements. The School’s considerable investment in its facilities in the last decade has caught the attention of prospective families and has been centered on ever-furthering Westminster’s strong commitment to community.

The new Director of Admissions must be fully conversant with leading enrollment technologies and usher Westminster more fully into a data-driven, paperless world. Being smart and creative about the utilization of resources and personnel—most of whom also coach and participate in the residential life of the school—will be critical to recruiting talented students who can benefit from a Westminster education and contribute to the community in significant ways. In short, effectively managing the 11-person admissions staff and embracing data and data analytics will be crucial to the achievement
of the successful candidate. Additionally, the successful candidate must place an emphasis on service, making sure that prospective families and current students and parents feel enthusiastically welcomed and embraced by and thoroughly informed about Westminster—both as an educational institution and an intimate community.

**Desired Qualities and Qualifications of the Next DOA**

Westminster seeks a Director of Admissions who leads with imagination, vision, energy, and drive. The most promising candidates will be strategic visionaries who understand the interdependence of all aspects of an educational institution as well as the workings of a sophisticated admissions office. The School is most interested in candidates who demonstrate many, if not all, of the following:

- Extensive experience leading admissions in K-grade 12, secondary, or higher education with a profound understanding of best practices, innovative programs, and data analytics;
- A dynamic, approachable presence that welcomes conversation and connection while respecting the views of others;
- Effective communication skills with faculty members, parents, students, community members, and the Board of Trustees, keeping these groups appropriately informed of potential issues, accomplishments, and needs;
- Excellent public speaking skills to capture and communicate the core values of a Westminster education;
- A leadership approach that, through appropriate delegation, professional development, and consistent evaluation, empowers colleagues and accomplishes objectives;
- A proven administrator with the ability to hold everyone accountable, serving first as a model of self-awareness and self-discipline;
- A firm belief in and reliance on the importance of data and data analytics;
- An accomplished manager who understands both systems and personnel and enjoys the day-to-day tasks as well as the time to help colleagues work at their best;
- Willingness and desire to be visible on campus and to connect with teachers, students, and staff;
- Enjoyment of working with prospective families and guiding them to wise decisions.

Additionally, the successful candidate will possess the following personal qualities:

- Warm and likeable
- Responsive and politically astute
- A doer and a delegator
- Externally oriented
- A sense of humor
- A teacher and mentor
- Strong, experienced leader
- Strategic thinker
TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should feel free to call or email either consultant for more information and an exploratory conversation. All inquiries are confidential. Applicants will need to 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 list of five (5) professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will be contacted only with the candidate’s permission) to:

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