

Director of Advancement Job Description

Merion Mercy Academy, an independent, Catholic, college preparatory school for girls in grades 9-12 outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, seeks a Director of Advancement.

Reporting to the President, the Director of Advancement provides innovative and strategic leadership in all aspects of institutional advancement. This position is responsible for designing and implementing comprehensive fundraising initiatives, overseeing donor engagement and stewardship, and managing development operations to support the school's mission and long-term financial sustainability. The Director of Advancement serves as a key member of the administrative team, working closely with the Board of Trustees, faculty, alumnae, parents, and other stakeholders to strengthen the school's culture of philanthropy.

Key Responsibilities:

Strategic Planning & Campaign Leadership

- Develop and execute a long-term advancement strategy aligned with the school's strategic priorities.
- Lead capital campaigns, major gift initiatives, and other fundraising efforts to secure philanthropic support for institutional needs.
- Oversee and implement donor events, regional gatherings, and on-campus engagement opportunities.
- Work closely with the President to cultivate, solicit, and steward major donors, providing targeted strategies for leadership gift prospects.
- Ensure timely and strategic solicitation efforts to maximize donor engagement and giving.

Fundraising & Donor Relations

- Oversee all areas of advancement, including alumnae engagement, annual giving, major gifts, planned giving, corporate and foundation relations, events, and parent engagement.
- Establish and implement fundraising strategies to enhance donor participation at all giving levels, including EITC/OSTC contributions and grant funding.
- Oversee stewardship efforts, including impact reports, donor appreciation initiatives, and exclusive engagement opportunities for key supporters.
- Manage and steward a portfolio of major donors and prospects, ensuring personalized cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship plans.
- Serve as the primary liaison between the school and key constituencies, articulating the impact of philanthropy and strengthening donor relationships.
- Partner with trustees and other key stakeholders to expand the donor pipeline, leveraging their networks to engage new prospects.

Advancement Team Leadership & Board Engagement

- Serve as the President's chief advisor on all matters related to advancement, philanthropy, and external relations.
- Lead and mentor the 5 members of the advancement team, identifying opportunities for growth and professional development among staff.
- Collaborate with the Board of Trustees, particularly relevant committees, to provide insight, reporting, and strategic guidance on fundraising priorities.

- Serve as the primary liaison to the Advancement Committee of the Board of Trustees, collaborating with the committee chair to set agendas, provide fundraising progress updates, and engage trustees in philanthropy.
- Support the President's engagement and leadership in fundraising, collaborating on key issues including prospect development, solicitation, stewardship, Board membership and external relations.
- Oversee the Advancement Office's operations, ensuring efficiency in data management, gift processing, donor stewardship, and reporting.
- Establish and maintain the budget for the Advancement office, working closely with the CFO coordinating gift reporting and restrictions while ensuring all directed gifts are handled to the donor's specific bequests.

Collaboration & Institutional Advancement

- Partner with the President, Director of Enrollment Management, faculty, and administrative team to align fundraising efforts with institutional priorities.
- Work closely with the communications and marketing team to develop cohesive messaging and marketing strategies that support donor engagement.
- Build and sustain strong relationships with parents, alumnae, and other key stakeholders to enhance community involvement and philanthropic support.

Position requirements include:

- Minimum of ten (10) years of increasingly responsible management positions in development, advancement and fundraising with a preference for independent school experience.
- Broad exposure to all facets of advancement, including data management and analysis, annual giving, major gifts, planned giving, corporate and foundation relations and capital campaign planning and implementation.
- Proven experience developing solicitation strategies and a track record of success cultivating and soliciting high-level donors.
- Strong management skills, both strategic and operational, and a demonstrated ability to build, manage, mentor and motivate an effective team, while effectively engaging and staffing volunteers.
- A team player and team builder that has a passion for and commitment to achieving excellence in all aspects of MMA's mission while fostering a high level of respect for colleagues.
- Ability to serve as a trusted advisor to the President and the Board of Trustees on matters related to development.
- Bachelor's degree required; Master's degree preferred.
- Must be willing and able to travel regionally and work nights and weekends when necessary.

Founded in 1884 by the Sisters of Mercy and located on a beautiful 12-acre campus on Philadelphia's Main Line, Merion Mercy currently enrolls over 400 students from diverse geographic areas and socioeconomic groups. Merion Mercy's academic program consistently challenges each student to prepare for college and a lifetime of service, thus developing competent and compassionate women for the future. Merion Mercy's faculty and staff are committed to providing a holistic education that not only stresses academic and personal excellence but also encourages all students to "Live Mercy and Seek Justice," an educational philosophy that builds a true sense of sisterhood that extends beyond the classroom.

Merion Mercy Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its hiring practices.

Merion Mercy Academy is working with The Gowan Group in this search. Interested candidates should send a resume, cover letter and contact information for three professional references to Mike

Vachow (mvachow@thegowangroup.com) and JP Watson (jpwatson@thegowangroup.com). Please do not contact the school directly.

More information about working at Merion Mercy Academy can be found at:
www.merion-mercy.com/careers.