

CHIEF FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONS OFFICER SEARCH

COLUMBUS ACADEMY

Columbus, Ohio

columbusacademy.org

Start Date: July 1, 2025



Columbus
Academy



Carney
Sandoe
& ASSOCIATES

CARNEYSANDOE.COM

Mission Statement

Columbus Academy – an independent, coeducational college preparatory school – enriches its academic tradition of excellence by valuing a broad diversity of students as it seeks to develop the complete person: mind, body, and character. The school rewards rigorous effort and accomplishment, fosters compassion, respect, and moral courage, and insists on integrity, fair play, and community service. Academy strives to develop and sustain a community of thoughtful, responsible, capable, and confident citizens eager to engage in a pluralistic and ever-changing world.

At a Glance



Established
1911



Enrollment
1,164



Total faculty
161



Student-faculty ratio
7:1



Students of color
48%



Financial aid awarded
\$4.1M



Faculty with advanced degrees
72%



Campus size
231 acres

Lower school enrollment: 518

Middle school enrollment: 241

Upper School enrollment: 409

Zip codes represented: 52

Faculty of color: 13%

Students receiving aid: 25%

Endowment: \$46M

Annual operating budget: \$44.6M



Overview

Recognized as one of the best independent schools in the country, Columbus Academy is an independent, coeducational college-preparatory school serving 1,164 students from age 3 through 12th grade. Situated on a sprawling 231-acre campus, the school is dedicated to fostering a diverse and inclusive community that nurtures the mind, body, and character of its students. The school is recognized for its rigorous academic program, commitment to moral development, and its impressive array of learning, wellness, community building, and extracurricular opportunities. Well-resourced and complemented by strong leadership, Columbus Academy provides its committed community light-filled spaces, expansive technology, learning labs, art studios, a makerspace, a performing arts complex, outdoor classrooms, eight fields of play, a natatorium, expansive indoor athletics and fitness facilities, and acres of quiet wooded trails.

Founded in 1911, Columbus Academy has exemplified the educational model that children are best served when home and school work together. As such, parents are an integral part of its community, adding to the overall culture of respect and collaboration. Here, students' days are filled with curiosity, enthusiasm, and energy. Their developing intellects are challenged while their individuality is praised, multiple perspectives enrich dialogue and discussion, and service learning fosters the development of responsible citizenship. In 2020, a new fieldhouse and wellness center opened to complement the school's impressive athletics and fitness facilities. The School now is poised for significant growth, fueled by the city of Columbus' rapid development and strategic partnerships with industry giants like Intel's new U.S. chip manufacturing plant and subsidiary corporations. With such an extensive campus, there is vast potential for expanding both the school's enrollment and facilities, including the development of new outdoor education and performing arts centers.

Columbus Academy seeks a seasoned and strategic professional to serve as the school's next Chief Financial and Operations Officer (CFOO), assuming the role in July 2025. Reporting to Head of School, Melissa Soderberg, the CFOO serves as leader of all finance and operations activities, acts as a strategic thought partner to both the Head of School and Board of Trustees, and collaborates with colleagues throughout the school community as a member of the leadership team. A successful CFOO will build upon the school's strong financial foundation to develop and execute strategic goals to advance the school's mission via both thoughtful management and innovation and to help navigate Columbus Academy's next important phase of development.



Opportunities and Challenges

Columbus Academy stands to benefit greatly from the decision by Intel to locate its US-based semiconductor factory in the Columbus area. Intel plans to invest \$20 billion into what may become the largest chip manufacturing plant in the world. This will represent the largest private sector investment in Ohio history and provides an extraordinary opportunity for the school. With Intel's move, other companies that work with Intel will need to follow suit, creating a cycle of investment and personnel moving to the area. The next CFOO will work closely with the Head of School and Board to implement plans in response to this unprecedented growth in the area. With a sprawling campus, the school is well positioned for thoughtful campus master planning leading to potential expansion and growth.

With several long-serving key administrators retiring or moving on, the next CFOO will be joining a leadership team with both veterans and recent hires coming together with new ideas to shape the direction of the school. In the Head of School, the next CFOO will have a true thought partner that seeks input, ideas, and creative thinking to accomplish goals and realize a new vision.

The next CFOO will oversee a college-sized campus with tremendous support from operations leaders who make managing a campus this size seem effortless. As mentioned above, a key strategic consideration will be how to use this bounty of land to support potential growth while also maintaining its pastoral beauty and natural spaces. There will also be an opportunity to review the deferred maintenance schedule and funding to ensure that the campus remains well-maintained, and that contingencies for unexpected needs are in place.

The new CFOO will lead highly competent finance and operations teams. Opportunities will exist to provide mentoring, teambuilding, performance evaluation, and professional development opportunities for staff. There will also be a need to review and add software solutions to enhance finance and operational efficiencies and ensure the culture of customer service remains at the core of the business office's mission.



Responsibilities

The CFOO is a critical member of the school's leadership team, serving as a strategic partner to the Head of School and ensuring the financial health and operational efficiency of the institution. The CFOO will oversee the financial strategy, daily operations, and long-range financial and capital planning of Columbus Academy, while also managing key relationships with both internal and external stakeholders. In addition to embracing Columbus Academy's mission, supporting its Head and leadership, and representing the School at public and professional forums, the new CFOO has a number of primary responsibilities:

- **Financial Leadership:** Provide strategic leadership, analysis, and management of finances. Establish financial and capital strategies consistent with the school's priorities. Administer and manage all employee benefit programs including health insurance, retirement, worker's compensation, life insurance, and other related plans. Manage insurance programs including property, casualty, medical, workers' compensation. Ensure compliance with all local and state reporting requirements.
- **Operations Oversight:** Oversee all business office and operations functions, including financial reporting, payroll, HR, and facilities maintenance. Manage relationships with banks, lenders, and vendors, and ensure compliance with loan terms.
- **Strategic Vision:** Partner with the Head of School to build and maintain long-term financial models and operational plans that support the school's growth, including campus development and technology improvements.
- **Leadership Team:** Serve on the Head of School's Administrative Team and lead, co-lead, or participate in several other teams and committees.
- **Endowment Management:** Oversee the school's endowment, tracking funds and ensuring accurate reporting.
- **Partnering with the Board:** Serve as the chief staff liaison to the Finance, Investment, Facilities Committees of the Board of Trustees, managing communications and financial reporting.
- **Facilities Management:** Work closely with the Facilities Director to oversee the physical campus, including buildings and grounds maintenance, capital planning, and construction projects.
- **Technology Integration:** Drive efforts to modernize the business office with technology solutions, focusing on efficiency, transparency, and enhanced reporting systems.
- **Collaboration:** Partner effectively with Advancement, Enrollment Management, and other departments.
- **Cultural Competency:** Participate in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging professional development.



Qualifications and Personal Attributes

- Bachelor's degree required, MBA preferred;
- 10-15 years of senior-level experience creating and executing financial planning and management strategies;
- Experience in an independent school preferred, though individuals with strong financial and leadership skills are welcome;
- Experience managing a team, setting clear goals, responsibilities, expectations, and clear methods of accountability;
- Experience managing a team with both in-office and remote members, successfully creating cohesion among the team itself;
- Proven record of accomplishment designing, implementing, and managing large-scale organizational change;
- Superb communication skills; excellent written, verbal, and presentation skills;
- Demonstrated ability to understand complex subjects, distill them, and then communicate them to varied audiences;
- 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.;
- Experience in human resource management, employee benefits (including pension plans), and payroll procedures. Knowledge of business and not-for-profit accounting policies, procedures, practices, facilities, and software programs. Blackbaud experience a plus;
- Ability to think and plan strategically and creatively;
- Ability to supervise, manage, and delegate multiple functions and activities;
- Ability to remain calm, flexible, and work effectively under pressure;
- Skilled at negotiating and initiating contracts with external vendors;
- Aptitude for high customer-service standards;
- Consistent demonstration of an entrepreneurial mindset;
- Demonstrated commitment to equitable and inclusive practices;
- A track record of strong integrity.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Columbus Academy.

[School Website](#)

[School Profile](#)

[Strategic Vision](#)

[About Columbus, Ohio](#)



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 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:

Greg Britton

Chief Operating Officer, Search & Consulting Group
ggb@carneysandoe.com

Elyse Waterhouse

Consultant
elyse.waterhouse@carneysandoe.com