

THE WEBB SCHOOLS



Chief Advancement Officer
Claremont, California

THE SEARCH

[The Webb Schools](#) seek a dynamic, inventive, and experienced fundraising professional to serve as chief advancement officer (CAO) at a time of great promise. With a new head of school, a strategic planning process underway, and a recently completed \$200 million campaign, the institution is strongly positioned for the future. Leveraging the momentum and success of the campaign, the CAO will design and lead an era of growth and innovation in Webb's fundraising and engagement efforts, galvanizing alumni, parents, families, and friends in support of advancing its dynamic learning community.

The Webb Schools ("Webb") is known for interdisciplinary studies and unique experiential learning, providing 400 boarding and day students with foundational skills and the freedom to design their own high school experience. Webb's parents and alumni span the globe, as Webb students originate from across the US, internationally, and locally. In July 2023, [Theresa Smith, PhD](#), became the head of school after a decade of service in Webb's administration.

This is an excellent opportunity to partner with a visionary new head as she steers Webb, one of the nation's best independent schools, forward to its next exciting chapter. Joining Dr. Smith early in her tenure and partnering closely with Webb's senior leadership team, the next CAO will play a key role in

strategizing and developing future fundraising, engagement, and stewardship initiatives in alignment with broader institutional priorities. Building upon the existing program, the next CAO will strengthen Webb's [office of advancement](#) by implementing best practices, building donor capacity and commitment, bringing fresh ideas that respond to the evolving nature of philanthropy, and applying data-driven outreach and fundraising strategies that increase the impact and effectiveness of the philanthropic enterprise. To this end, the CAO will assess current operations and set a strategy for advancement that elevates all programs, increases alumni and parent engagement, retains existing and attracts new trustees, and integrates the school's strategic pillars in all philanthropic messaging. A key metric of success will be moving Webb's endowment toward \$100 million from its current valuation of \$62.5 million.

Webb's next CAO will be imaginative, experienced, and capable of building and deploying an integrated and collaborative advancement operation. The successful candidate will be keen to engage with Webb's students, parents, and alumni, build strong relationships with faculty and staff, and be visibly active on campus. This executive will have at least 10 years of significant experience in building and expanding philanthropic and engagement programs; providing leadership and direction for a staff with untapped potential; significant personal success in donor cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship at principal gift levels, both domestically and internationally; comprehensive knowledge of strategies employed in the major development and alumni affairs functions; and clear achievement in increasing constituents' – internal and external – commitment to an institution. Bachelor's degree required.

The Webb Schools have retained Rachel Ellenport of the national executive search firm, Isaacson, Miller, to assist in this important recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.



ADVANCEMENT AT WEBB

Webb's advancement program recently completed a highly successful [\\$200 million campaign](#) in 2024, which publicly launched in 2021 with an incredible \$100 million estate gift made by an alumnus. During the campaign, 43 new [endowed funds](#) were established, including 17 for scholarships and 15 for academic and faculty support. The [Legacy Hall of Fame](#) recognizes over 30 donors who have given \$1 million or more to Webb. The [Thompson and Vivian Webb Society](#) recognizes over 165 alumni, parents, and friends who have made an estate commitment or entered into a life-income agreement with The Webb Schools or the Alf Museum. [The Webb Fund](#) has averaged \$2.8 million over the last five years, and total giving in the past two years was \$11.8 million (2022-2023) and \$6.5 million (2023-2024).

Over 70 percent of Webb parents contribute to the school annually, and the parent volunteer group, The Affiliates, is actively engaged in supporting the school in myriad ways. More than 4,600 alumni have strong emotional ties to Webb; many are cheerleaders in their communities and play a significant role in new student recruitment and alumni engagement efforts. In 2023-2024, alumni giving was 22 percent.

The 10-person [office of advancement](#) is structured into three teams currently: development (which includes parent relations and special events), alumni and donor relations, and advancement services. The

next CAO will have the opportunity to evaluate and determine an organizational structure that will maximize the team.

CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

The next CAO will shape advancement under an enthusiastic, strategic, and invested new head of school. Reporting directly to Dr. Smith, this individual will serve as a member of her senior leadership team and work closely with this group to establish priorities and devise strategies for school-wide objectives.

The CAO will provide leadership and strategic vision to all aspects of Webb's constituent relationships and fundraising activities in alignment with the school's strategic pillars. This leader will mentor the existing team; hire new staff as necessary; and engage, educate, and support faculty, staff, and other key partners in the school's fundraising effort. The CAO will also work closely with the [board of trustees](#), key volunteers, and faculty, using their time and talents efficiently and appropriately to increase engagement and philanthropic support. Success will result in expanded relationship building and deeper integration of the advancement team with internal and external constituents and within the division; strategic growth and alignment in annual, major, and planned giving with a focus on increasing the endowment; robust parent and alumni engagement; and elevated and intentional stewardship of existing and past donors.

The CAO will personally and successfully engage select prospects and donors, partner with leadership gift officers to determine appropriate strategies for cultivating prospective donors, and ensure that the advancement operation effectively engages Webb's 4,600 alumni and current families.

In addition to the position's formal duties, the CAO must be a contributing member to a cohesive and mutually supportive senior management team, exhibiting integrity, warmth, self-awareness, responsiveness, and humor.

The key responsibilities and duties of the CAO include:

- Assess Webb's fundraising potential from all sources; serve as the architect in strengthening the advancement operation to broaden development outreach and constituent relations activities.
- Based on the head's priorities and vision, and in close partnership with the director of marketing and strategic communications, develop clear, compelling messages that describe the strengths and aspirations of the school and disseminate that information internally and externally in a way that excites and unites the community about Webb's priorities for philanthropic support.
- Set direction and priorities for the advancement staff. Inspire and motivate the team through active communication and delegation, placing their work within the context of Webb's strategic priorities and mission.
- Serve as a player-coach for front-line staff in developing effective prospect strategies, execution of moves, closing with prospects, and stewardship. The CAO must lead by example, promote teamwork, and inspire others to action.

- Leverage existing parent volunteers through the Affiliates to ensure ongoing success in annual giving and that each successive class of parents is as – or more – engaged than the current parent corps.
- Deepen existing alumni relationships and proactively seek to engage and strengthen new relationships with a keen eye for increasing philanthropic participation. Pioneer new and innovative techniques to establish multiple touchpoints to connect with alumni and friends across generations.
- Build capacity and volunteer engagement by tracking and nurturing Webb’s alumni, parents, and friends. Develop frameworks to leverage and mobilize volunteers, bring them together around common goals, and raise the sights and involvement of volunteers and donors at all levels.
- Evaluate, strengthen, and enhance the major gift pipeline as well as the planned giving program; implement new strategies to identify and acquire prospective donors, increase donor retention, and upgrade and renew existing donors.
- Assess donor stewardship and ensure that gifts are acknowledged in a comprehensive, timely, and personally meaningful fashion; use stewardship programs to strengthen donors’ commitment to Webb; and convey the impact of their contributions on the school.
- Guide and support the head in her role as chief fundraiser, serving as coach and co-strategist in cultivating and soliciting transformative gifts. Ensure that she is well-briefed and that her time spent is highly productive and rewarding. Guide and support other senior staff in development activities as appropriate.
- Cultivate strong working relationships with administrators, faculty, and staff across Webb. Ensure that the office of advancement is seen as an engaged, collaborative, and responsive partner in service to the school.
- Provide the highest level of personal support to the board and volunteer leadership in their philanthropy and other support on Webb’s behalf; ensure that their board experience is meaningful and productive and that the board’s intellectual and emotional connection to Webb and each other is strengthened.
- Work with the head to identify and recruit new prospective board members who are positioned to engage philanthropically with Webb.
- Review existing office structure and explore opportunities for improvement to maximize coordination and productivity, enhance communication, and promote staff collaboration and professional satisfaction.
- Guide team members across the office of advancement to consistently collaborate and communicate, internally and across the school, in order to better integrate advancement efforts throughout the institution.
- Ensure that all systems and processes, from data capture to gift acceptances and processing, maximize available intelligence via reporting and also follow sound budgetary, legal, and accountability practices.



QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

This position requires an engaging and seasoned fundraiser and manager who possesses superb communications skills, a collegial and cooperative orientation, intellectual curiosity, and a desire to connect with the entire Webb community.

- A deep appreciation for the history and aspirations of The Webb Schools and The Alf Museum and the ability to articulate persuasively the importance of its work and mission to internal and external audiences.
- Exemplary interpersonal and listening skills; impeccable attention to detail; superb follow-through; strong personal integrity, emotional intelligence, and work ethic, coupled with a sense of humor and perspective.
- At least 10 years of experience with the full range of best-in-class advancement functions: alumni and parent relations, volunteer and board development, annual giving, stewardship, advancement services, major and principal gifts, and planned giving; demonstrated experience in international fundraising is a decided plus.
- Experience building on and reinforcing best practices in an existing advancement program, resulting in a significant increase in philanthropic revenue for an organization. Success in increasing the

effectiveness of an advancement program and its staff through established objectives and performance standards.

- The credibility, maturity, and sound judgment required to effectively engage and leverage Webb's leadership in the cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of key prospects and donors.
- A proven track record of success in personally cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding gifts of seven figures or more. A high level of comfort and effectiveness working with high net-worth individuals as donors and volunteers.
- Superior written and oral communication skills, including the ability to succinctly communicate both vision and process to the head and other key constituents, utilizing data and metrics as appropriate.
- The desire to be an actively engaged and visible member of the Webb community, building bridges and strong collaborative relationships with faculty, staff, alumni, and parents.
- Contributes to the delivery of the mission, vision, and values of the school community.
- Demonstrates inclusive and equitable practices to ensure that all members of the community feel a sense of belonging.
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The anticipated salary range for this position is \$200,000 to \$235,000. The Webb Schools offer competitive compensation. In setting position ranges, Webb reviews numerous factors, including industry data from NAIS, CAIS, NBOA, and other market data.

Webb believes a strong benefits package is important for employee stability and retention. Benefits include highly subsidized health plans, robust retirement contributions, and tuition remission.

Webb benefits from the location of its [150-acre campus](#) in the city of Claremont, CA, 35 miles east of Los Angeles and at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. Webb's proximity to the Claremont Colleges affords academic partnerships. The city of Claremont, with a population of more than 35,000, features sidewalk cafes, specialty shops, tree-lined streets, and bungalow homes. Claremont was recently ranked the 5th most desirable town in the United States, and housing prices are more affordable than many areas in Southern California. With stunning views of the San Gabriel Mountains, Claremont is less than an hour away from downtown Los Angeles and from mountains, desert, and beaches.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/webb-schools/chief-advancement-officer>.

Rachel Ellenport, Partner
Elizabeth Neustaedter, Principal
Rebecca Lyons, Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

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ADDENDUM

THE WEBB SCHOOLS

The Webb Schools are home to roughly 400 students and 65 faculty, providing a 6:1 student-teacher ratio. It is known for interdisciplinary studies and unique experiential learning, providing students with foundational skills and the freedom to design their own high school experience, either as boarders or day students. Webb is an inclusive school community characterized by openness, acceptance, and empathy, where every individual is valued, respected, and supported. Located in Southern California, one of the most diverse areas in the US, Webb's community is enriched by the different perspectives, beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences of its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Embracing diversity in all its forms is crucial to Webb's mission, especially its commitment to providing a top-tier learning environment that nurtures future leaders who think, act, lead, and serve.

The Webb School of California was founded in 1922 and served boys in a boarding and day school environment. In 1981, the Vivian Webb School was established to serve girls. Although the schools shared a campus, each had its own traditions and culture. Over time, the schools' programs grew together, and in 2022, on the 100th anniversary of its founding, Webb's board and administration announced that the institution would formally bring together the two schools into one. [This academic year marks the first year as one school, and the evolution of Webb's programs into a new fully unified school model will be complete by 2028.](#)

The [Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology](#), located on the campus of The Webb Schools, is the only nationally accredited museum in the USA on a high school campus. The Alf Museum provides a unique research program for Webb students where they study fossils they find on collecting trips and publish the results of their research in collaboration with museum staff, which is a unique program for secondary school students and only offered at Webb.