



## PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL

*Mission: "Portsmouth Abbey School helps young men and women grow in knowledge and grace. As a Benedictine boarding and day school committed to excellence, we embrace the Catholic faith while nurturing reverence for God and the human person, love of learning, and commitment to community life."*

[www.portsmouthabbey.org](http://www.portsmouthabbey.org)

Portsmouth, RI  
In Person Employment

### **ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI AFFAIRS**

#### **THE OPPORTUNITY**



Portsmouth Abbey School (Portsmouth, the School) is the nation's leading coeducational Catholic Benedictine boarding school for 340 students in grades 9 through 12. Unique in its English Benedictine tradition, the School offers a challenging academic curriculum rich in mathematics and science and built upon a signature humanities program.

Portsmouth is at a momentous occasion in its history. In preparation for its centennial celebration in the 2026-2027 school year, Portsmouth's community is committed to a comprehensive centennial campaign to raise funds for endowment, annual, and capital projects.

Portsmouth seeks a mission-driven and devoted Assistant Head of Development and Alumni Affairs to provide leadership, strategic direction, and operational management of the centennial campaign,

ensuring its success from conceptualization through implementation. The successful candidate will partner with the Head of School, Board of Directors, alumni, fundraising counsel, and senior leadership to develop, finalize, and implement the campaign plan. S/he will lead campaign execution of the prospective donor constituency and carry a portfolio of top prospects. The ideal candidate will meet regularly with alumni, friends of the School, and other constituents across the country and internationally. The candidate will lead the identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of prospects in support of the centennial campaign. In parallel, the Assistant Head of Development and Alumni Affairs will expand the School's annual fund, which raises \$2 million annually from alumni, parents, parents of alumni, faculty and staff, and friends of the School.

The Assistant Head of Development and Alumni Affairs will report to the Head of School and lead a team of six development professionals with the opportunity to recruit and further build the team in preparation for the centennial campaign. S/he will serve on Portsmouth's Head of School Council, which is comprised of 12 leaders from across the School.

The ideal candidate will build deep partnerships and collaborate effectively across campus, especially with the Director of Communications, the Director of Parent Relations, and the Parents' Association. The Assistant Head of Development and Alumni Affairs will work closely with, and support, Portsmouth's Campaign Committee. The candidate will partner with the Head of School on governance and identification of potential board members. S/he will serve as staff liaison to the External Affairs and Governance Committees of the Board of Directors.

Portsmouth Abbey School has retained [Freeman Philanthropic Services, LLC](#) to assist on this critical recruitment.

## ABOUT PORTSMOUTH ABBEY SCHOOL



Originally called Portsmouth Priory, the School officially opened with 18 students in September of 1926. Today, Portsmouth flourishes as the nation's leading coeducational Catholic Benedictine boarding school for 340 students in grades 9 through 12. Unique in its English Benedictine tradition, the School offers a challenging academic curriculum rich in mathematics and science and built upon a signature humanities program.

At the core of the mission of Portsmouth is the desire to "help young men and women grow in knowledge and grace". In light of this basic apostleship, the spiritual life of the School is inspired by the Benedictine ideal of a community life of work and prayer ("ora et labora"). As Saint Benedict sought in his Rule for monks, so too does the School community seek a life of spiritual growth, centered in intellectual development and balanced with physical and social activities, recreation, and rest.

Informed by the Catholic tradition, Portsmouth offers a comprehensive and structured academic, athletics, and residential life program. The School is distinguished by its robust student life offerings, which provides students with leadership opportunities, arts, and athletics in fulfillment of their personal growth. These offerings include 45 athletics teams, diverse community service programs, many off-campus enrichment opportunities, a state-of-the-art squash and fitness center, a multi-sport synthetic turf field, and world-class golf, sailing, and equestrian facilities. Portsmouth's intimate class

size, with a student-teacher ratio of 5-to-1, allows students the opportunity to become leaders and active members of the community.

## VISION STATEMENT

*Catholic* means universal, and we welcome students from all backgrounds, as Jesus was welcoming to all people. We affirm that each person is made in the image and likeness of God, and is endowed with inherent human dignity and infinite worth. We believe God is at the center of the human search for meaning, and the perennial questions asked by our students—who am I? what is goodness? how am I to live?—find their answers in God. We assist our students in their search for God as the foundation of their lives. We seek student growth in grace: the regenerative power of Christ that lifts hearts and transforms lives.

“Love of learning and the desire for God” are joined in the Benedictine tradition. Love of learning is grounded in wonder, undertaken in humility, and fueled by the hunger for truth. Our students are called to a close reading of classic texts and critical engagement with the written word. Our research-driven science program enables students to be keen observers of the world around them. We foster engagement in fine arts and athletics as key dimensions of human excellence. Education in the Catholic intellectual tradition forms us in the things that matter: truth, goodness, and beauty.

Our shared life of study, prayer, and recreation sustains a community characterized by friendship and joy. Called to live in mutual service to each other, we seek the growth of our members as individuals, while advancing the common good. We nurture the talents of each of our students for energetic leadership and service in our own community and throughout the world.

## PORTSMOUTH HISTORY

In 1918, Dom Leonard Sargent was searching for a property on which to build a Benedictine monastery. Upon discovering a beautiful 70-acre plot on the shores of Narragansett Bay, he followed an old superstition and dropped a medal of St. Benedict in the field. Thus began the vision that came to fruition as Portsmouth Abbey and School, continuing the 1,500-year tradition of Benedictine spiritual devotion and dedication to learning and enlightenment.

Of the 27 buildings that comprise its 500-acre campus, 14 have been designed by the renowned modernist architect Pietro Belluschi who was part of the "Bauhaus" movement and head of urban planning and architecture at MIT. Portsmouth Abbey's *Church of St. Gregory the Great* is considered the most important piece of conservative modernist architecture in Rhode Island.

The School embraced coeducation for boarding and day students in 1991, and in 1998 recommitted itself to the Western intellectual tradition that is founded in teachings that date back to ancient Greece.

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 TO 2027

Portsmouth is engaged in a five-year strategic plan, culminating in the School's centennial in the 2026-2027 school year. The School's strategic plan is focused on ensuring that the “school of the Lord's service” will be true to its Catholic roots and flourish well into the next century. The School's strategic goals and priorities are:

- **Strategic Goal #1:** Recruit, retain, and cultivate mission-aligned and mission-enthusiastic faculty and staff.
- **Strategic Goal #2:** Review the academic, spiritual, and student life programs to ensure the School provides an integral, mission-driven experience that resonates with students.
- **Strategic Goal #3:** Build strong networks of philanthropic support.

- **Strategic Goal #4:** Meet enrollment targets with mission-aligned students and families.
- **Strategic Goal #5:** Maintain a Board focus on strategic concerns and retaining/building a high-functioning Board of Directors.

[Please click here](#) to read more about Portsmouth's strategic plan.

## LEADERSHIP



### **Matthew P. Walter P'18 '20, Head of School**

Matt arrived at Portsmouth Abbey School in 2014 to serve as director of development and alumni affairs and was appointed assistant headmaster for advancement in 2020, acting headmaster in 2021 and head of school in 2022. He is a 1993 graduate of The University of Texas School of Law, a 1990 graduate of Princeton University, and a 1986 graduate of Cistercian Preparatory School in Irving, Texas. In 1998 Matt returned to his alma mater to serve as director of development and alumni relations at Cistercian Prep. Following that, he stepped into the same position at St. Mary's High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where he eventually served as vice president for development. Matt is married to Paula Walter, Portsmouth's dean of student life, and they live on campus in St. Brigid's House. Their two sons both graduated from Portsmouth Abbey, John Patrick '18, and Matthew '20.



### **Christopher Abbate '88 P'20 '23, Chair, Board of Directors**

Chris is a Managing Partner and Co-CEO of Breakwall Capital. He is based in Newport, Rhode Island and New York.

Previously, Chris was a Partner at Riverstone Holdings LLC, as well as a Founder and Co-Head of Riverstone Credit Partners, focused on the firm's credit and capital markets activities.

Prior to joining Riverstone in 2014, Chris was a Managing Director and Head of Energy Leveraged Finance at Citigroup. Prior to Citigroup, Chris was the Head of U.S. Leveraged Finance Origination at UBS Investment Bank. Chris joined UBS in 2000 as an Associate Director in the Energy group, where he worked covering upstream and midstream oil and gas companies. He started his investment banking career in 1997 at PaineWebber as an Associate in the Energy group. Prior to his career on Wall Street, Chris served as an Intelligence Applications Officer in the U.S. Air Force for five years.

Chris graduated with a B.A. from Duke University and has an MBA from the University of Maryland. In addition to various corporate boards, Chris is Chairman of the Board of the Portsmouth Abbey School.

### **Board of Directors**

Portsmouth Abbey School's Board of Directors is comprised of dedicated and engaged leaders committed to Portsmouth Abbey School's mission, vision, and continued growth. The Board is a diverse group of dedicated alumni and friends of the School, who are leaders in business, finance, legal, and insurance.

For a complete list of members of the Board of Directors, [please click here](#).

## REPORTING AND IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS

The Assistant Head of Development and Alumni Affairs will report to the Head of School and lead a team of six development professionals with the opportunity to recruit and further build the team in preparation for the centennial campaign. S/he will serve on Portsmouth's Head of School Council, which is comprised of 12 leaders from across the School.

The ideal candidate will build deep partnerships and collaborate effectively across campus, especially with the Director of Communications, the Director of Parent Relations, and the Parents' Association.

The Assistant Head of Development and Alumni Affairs will work closely with, and support, Portsmouth's Campaign Committee. The candidate will partner with the Head of School on governance and identification of potential board members. S/he will serve as staff liaison to the External Affairs and Governance Committees of the Board of Directors.

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES

As a key member of Portsmouth Abbey School, the Assistant Head of Development and Alumni Affairs will contribute broadly to all aspects of the fulfillment of the School's mission and impact. The successful candidate will have the demonstrated track record to meet and exceed the following responsibilities:

- Work collaboratively with the Head of School, Board of Directors, alumni, high-level volunteers, and colleagues to guide the identification and development of strategic partnerships that align Portsmouth's mission and educational priorities with prospects;
- Partner with the Head of School, senior leadership, and fundraising counsel to develop, finalize, and implement a strategic plan for the centennial campaign;
- Provide leadership, strategic direction, and operational management of the School's centennial campaign, ensuring its success from conceptualization through implementation;
- Develop an increasingly refined and well-researched pool of transformational campaign gift prospects;
- Lead campaign execution of the prospective donor constituency, including regular domestic and international travel;
- Obtain support for the centennial campaign while continuing to build a robust development operation, focusing on the expansion of major, annual, and planned gifts;
- Lead, direct, and coordinate opportunities to strengthen and expand philanthropy for Portsmouth, ensuring that the approach is entrepreneurial, comprehensive, and prospect-driven;
- Build strong collaborative relationships with Portsmouth's leadership, board members, colleagues, and volunteers and further the culture of philanthropy across the School;
- Build a robust major gifts program, expand and diversify the prospect base, and cultivate relationships for solicitation;
- Carry and refine a personal portfolio of top donors and prospects, including identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of parents, family foundations, and friends of the School; and

- Design meaningful, compelling, and persuasive philanthropic cases for support, fundraising materials, proposals, and presentations for the centennial campaign aligned with Portsmouth's mission.

## IDEAL CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTRIBUTES

The successful Assistant Head of Development and Alumni Affairs will possess the following characteristics and attributes:

- Sincere enthusiasm and alignment with Portsmouth Abbey School's mission, values, and vision;
- Stature and ability to serve as an active leader in a mission-based community, guided by knowledge, grace, and commitment to excellence;
- Significant comprehensive campaign leadership experience;
- Trusted, respected, and hard-working leader with high emotional intelligence;
- Stature, professional experience, and relationship building skills to engage, motivate, and support high-caliber leaders and volunteers, alumni, accomplished professionals, donors, prospects, and other internal and external constituencies;
- Ability to elicit, understand, and synthesize information and translate this information into compelling cases for support which motivate constituencies to give;
- Demonstrated track record in closing gifts, as well as a demonstrated record of personal solicitations from individuals, including the design and execution of strategies for identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship;
- Demonstrated track record of increasing and diversifying sources of support;
- Grace, poise, and highly advanced facilitation skills to promote fundraising partnerships;
- Excellent communication (writing, proofreading, speaking, presentation, and listening) skills and keen attention to detail, with the ability to effectively communicate with all levels of the organization, as well as external constituencies;
- Commitment to the highest standards of professionalism and best fundraising practices;
- Unquestioned integrity, sound judgment, and a sense of perspective;
- Proven track record of providing strategic direction, leadership, people management and mentorship, and operational management of development professionals and fundraising initiatives, resulting in marked improvement and growth;
- Experience with Raiser's Edge preferred; and
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree preferred.

## COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The compensation and benefits package will be competitive and commensurate with the selected candidate's background and experience. The Assistant Head of Development and Alumni Affairs will be required to work five days a week in person, and on nights and weekends as necessary.

## CONFIDENTIAL INQUIRIES AND HOW TO APPLY

Portsmouth Abbey School has retained Freeman Philanthropic Services, LLC to assist on this recruitment. FPS is a national leader in executive recruitment for the not-for-profit sector and brings a proven track record of recruiting top talent to diverse institutions.

Please send all inquiries, applications, and nominations directly to FPS via email at [PortsmouthAbbey@glfreeman.com](mailto:PortsmouthAbbey@glfreeman.com).

All applications must include: (1) an up-to-date resume; and (2) a formal letter of interest (addressed to Gail L. Freeman, President of FPS) that specifically cites the experiences that best prepare the applicant for this role and why this particular opportunity at Portsmouth Abbey School is the logical and desired next step in their career. Additional materials and information will be requested during the search and interview process.

## APPENDIX I. PORTSMOUTH ABBEY MONASTERY



Portsmouth Abbey Monastery is a house of prayer and work for the Monks of the English Benedictine Congregation. The Monastery is over 100 years old with the focus of its prayer and work on Contemplation, so-called Pure Prayer, and Union with God. The Monastery hosts individual, group, discernment, and vocation visits for individuals or groups looking for intensive spiritual study, meditative time in silence, and prayer of the Divine Office with the monastic community.

[Please click here](#) to learn more about Portsmouth Abbey Monastery.