Westminster School

Mission
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.

OVERVIEW

Founded in 1888, Westminster School has a long history as one of the finest college-preparatory schools in the country. As a private, coeducational boarding and day school for students in grades 9-12 and postgraduates, Westminster surrounds its students with smart, accomplished, and resourceful faculty and staff who instill a desire to pursue excellence. In turn, Westminster students are inspired by opportunities to make a difference – both in their local communities and in their vocational choices long after their time on the Simsbury campus.

Westminster students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni highlight the school’s motto of Grit & Grace and the school’s core values of community, character, balance, and involvement as what stand out most about their Westminster experience. These values define and distinguish Westminster School, and they represent a way of life for students and faculty.

Current Head of School Bill Philip announced in July that the 2020-2021 school year will be his last at Westminster. Philip has served the school for 38 years, including as Head since 2010. The school seeks a leader who appreciates the foundations and character of the school, but who also offers visionary leadership for new directions moving forward. The next Head will be an experienced educational leader who embodies the school’s mission and who projects a sense of optimism and boundless possibility. This is an exceptional opportunity to lead an outstanding secondary school with deep ties to its community and an unwavering commitment to the growth and well-being of its students.
SCHOOL HISTORY

Westminster School was founded by William Lee Cushing in 1888 as a boys’ school in Dobbs Ferry, New York. A graduate of Yale, Cushing was a firm believer in the traditional form of English boarding school education. He moved the school to its current location in Simsbury, Connecticut, in 1900 and remained as headmaster until his death in 1921. Along with his educational philosophy, Cushing also left the school its inspiring Latin motto *virtute et numine*, which is translated liberally as Grit & Grace. Cushing Hall, named for the founder, was the original building on campus and retains a central role in campus life today.

In the early 1970s, Westminster School opened its doors to day students and also became a leader among independent schools in active recruitment of historically underrepresented students. In 1971, girls were admitted for the first time as day students and in 1977 as boarding students.

As the school celebrated its first century in 1988, it saw a significant enhancement to the arts program with the completion of Werner Centennial Center, named for its long-serving sixth headmaster, Don Werner. 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.

In 2009, Westminster opened its new 85,000-square-foot state-of-the-art Armour Academic Center, and in 2013, completed a $22 million project that included building two new student and faculty residences and an expanded main lawn area of campus.
More recently, the school’s Soar Together Campaign has continued the physical transformation of the campus with the building of Armstrong Dining Hall, Brockelman Student Center, another student and faculty residence, and other new faculty residences. The campaign continues as it raises endowment support for students and faculty and is focused on reaching $90 million, when a challenge gift from an anonymous donor will provide an additional $10 million in financial aid. It has recently reached a milestone of $82 million.

Westminster graduates have gone on to achieve eminent positions in industry, the military, medicine, government, social services, the arts, and athletics, thanks to the outstanding teachers and headmasters who followed in the tradition of Cushing’s teaching ideals.

THE SCHOOL

Westminster School is a close-knit community of 95 faculty and 400 students (75% boarding; 15% international) from across the country and around the world. Students are known at Westminster. With a 5:1 student/teacher ratio and an average class size of 12, Westminster is a place where students have the opportunity and support to succeed. Of the 95 faculty members, 58% hold advanced degrees, 67 live on campus, 10 are alumni, and 18 have served Westminster for more than 20 years. Many serve in the traditional roles of teacher, coach, and advisor, and live in the dorms on campus.

The school community is an inclusive environment where people can share their stories and contribute their ideas. Students are encouraged to be authentic, to feel inspired to learn from those different from them, and to celebrate diversity and multiculturalism. Westminster is committed to diversity and inclusion and aims to deepen cultural competency, expand global understanding, and foster a resilient and dynamic community through a variety of student alliance and affinity groups, schoolwide programs such as Diversity Day and guest speakers, and opportunities for students and faculty to attend diversity conferences.
Driven by a desire to serve young people and aware of the obligation of a private school to serve a public purpose, Westminster School’s Hartford Partnership programs directly impact the young people of Hartford and the students of Westminster School. Programs include Covenant Prep Summer Academy, a four-week academic camp children at Covenant Prep School attend each academic year; the Loaves and Fishes program, where members of the Westminster community serve lunch at a soup kitchen once a month; and the Spring Break in Hartford program that extends the school’s outreach into the Hartford area by lending a hand to various service organizations and schools. Additionally, founded in 2018, Horizons at Westminster is part of a national network of K-8 summer school programs. Horizons at Westminster makes an eight-year commitment to its students, as the same children return each summer for a six-week program.

ACADEMICS

Since its founding, Westminster School has been committed to a challenging college-preparatory experience that demands high academic standards, participation in the arts and athletics, and a strong commitment to service for others. The unique combination of grit and grace is what makes Westminster student successful, on the Hill and beyond.

By the time students prepare to leave Westminster to further their academic experience in college, they have developed a nascent passion for a number of disciplines. English, mathematics, language, history, science, and the visual and performing arts have specific requirements for graduation. All academic departments offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses and examinations. In choosing advanced courses beyond the required graduation level, students are encouraged to pursue a subject to the highest level possible and to ascertain any special requirements of colleges and programs of their choice. Through an individualized approach inclusive of each student’s needs, caring and passionate faculty prepare students for the 21st century, giving them the tools and skills they need to be successful in a changing world.

“At Westminster, I can be myself.”
-Sixth Form student
Westminster students can also learn beyond the classroom through a number of study abroad opportunities, such as language trips and the Semester-at-Sea program, which offers accepted students an ocean voyage with a curriculum focused on global issues. Westminster students accepted by the prestigious School Year Abroad program experience yearlong study and travel in China, France, Italy, or Spain. Another option for study abroad is available through the equally prestigious English Speaking Union. Available to Westminster graduates in the year following graduation, the program allows a year of study and travel in the United Kingdom.

Individualized support and attention carry through to the College Counseling Office where college counselors help students develop the strongest possible choices from which to select the school that is “the right fit.” For the Class of 2020, 76% were admitted to Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges “most competitive” category, and 93% were admitted to the “most competitive” and “highly competitive” categories.

College Matriculation
Members of the Class of 2020 matriculated to the following schools, among others:

Babson College
Barnard College
Bates College
Boston College
Boston University
Bowdoin College
Brandeis University
Brown University
Bucknell University
Colby College
Colgate University
College of the Holy Cross
Columbia University
Connecticut College
Cornell University
Dalhousie University, Canada
Denison University
Emerson College
Endicott College
Fordham University, Lincoln Center
Franklin and Marshall College
George Washington University
Georgetown University
Harvard College
Kenyon College
Lafayette College
Lebanon Valley College
Lehigh University
Miami University
Oxford
Middlebury College
Northeastern University
Northwestern University
Providence College
Queen’s University
Santa Clara University
Skidmore College
Southern Methodist University
St. Lawrence University
Stanford University
Swarthmore College
Syracuse University
The University of Tampa
Trinity College
Tufts University
Tulane University of Louisiana
University at Albany, SUNY
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Connecticut
University of Denver
University of Florida
University of Miami
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
University of Pennsylvania
University of Richmond
University of Southern California
Villanova University
Wake Forest University
Washington University in St. Louis
Wesleyan University
Wheaton College - (Mass.)
Williams College
Yale University
ARTS AND ATHLETICS

From the stage to the playing fields, Westminster students have myriad opportunities to hone their skills, practice a craft, compete, and contribute to a team.

Visual and performing artists learn an understanding of traditions and methods while building confidence, practicing self-expression, and gaining a lifelong appreciation of the arts. A range of opportunities abounds, including joining a student-organized a cappella group, providing choreography or musical accompaniment for a Chapel presentation, performing in the Dance Ensemble or Chamber Choir, or contributing to a publication such as The Westminster News or The Martlet, the student/faculty art and literary magazine.

Athletic success at Westminster is measured not only by wins and losses, but through the bonds created between teammates and coaches, individual and team improvement, and personal growth that occur when wearing black and gold. When students learn how to be competitors and how to cooperate with one another, they are better prepared to be citizens of the global world. Sports include boys and girls cross country, girls field hockey, boys and girls soccer, boys water polo, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls hockey, boys and girls squash, boys and girls swimming and diving, boys baseball, boys and girls golf, boys and girls lacrosse, girls softball, boys and girls tennis, and boys and girls track.

STUDENT LIFE

Students quickly learn to recognize all of the exciting opportunities Westminster offers, whether they live on or off campus. Through the shared experiences of attending classes, family-style lunch, participating in athletics and the arts, and being involved in community service and student organizations, students are supported and build self-identities in the context of a place where they make a difference.
Clubs and Organizations
With over 30 student organizations, students enjoy outstanding opportunities to pursue special interests, make friends, and realize their potential as leaders. From the John Hay Society that organizes and runs the Chapel Program, to the Black & Gold tour guide program, to the Student Council that plays a leading role in setting the right tone on campus, every student's involvement as a leader, organizer, and participant is welcomed and encouraged. Other clubs include Eco Team, Gender and Sexuality Alliance, Model United Nations, Multicultural Student Union, and the Student Tutor Program.

Advising and Student Life Curriculum
Advising is a part of Westminster’s overall emphasis on individual attention to its students. Westminster prides itself on educating the whole student rather than simply transmitting information, and relationships between advisees and advisors are integral to achieving that important goal. Students meet with advisors at least once a week. The relationships between advisors and their advisees are some of the most long lasting of the many relationships formed on the Hill.

Additionally, a robust student life curriculum includes all-school presentations on student life issues; grade-specific time for discussion of topics such as relationships, conflict resolution, and anxiety and stress; and a focused health education program that incorporates peer education elements. In addition to the organic programs, the school’s student health and wellness curriculum provides an intentional curriculum for students to learn about topics that involve their personal wellness, their character development, and their healthy relationships with other people.

Traditions
Westminster offers a culture rich with campus traditions, such as family-style dining, the Sign-In Ceremony welcoming new students into the community, the Pin Ceremony for Sixth Form students, and the Lawn Ceremony simultaneously celebrating Sixth Form students on the eve of their Commencement
and welcoming Fifth Form students into the role of leaders on campus. The Chapel Program is one of the oldest traditions at Westminster, as students, faculty, and guests share experiences through chapel talks. Perhaps Westminster’s most beloved tradition, Hill Holidays give students a day off from school four times each year. The announcements of Hill Holidays are usually done in entertaining, stealthy, or other memorable ways that keep students smiling.

Residential Life
Westminster views residential life as an extension of its core value, community. The boarding program begins in the Third Form year when all Third Formers live together and continues into the Sixth Form year. The majority of Westminster faculty live in dorms among students, opening their lives and apartments to students. Corridor supervisors invite students into their apartments for study breaks, celebrations, and extra-help sessions.

CAMPUS
Westminster School’s forested 200-acre north-central Connecticut campus, situated on scenic Williams Hill with views of the Farmington Valley, offers some of the finest boarding school facilities available in North America. Many of the facilities were designed by noted architect Graham Gund ’59 and utilize leading-edge green design with geothermal heating and cooling.

Westminster’s spectacular 85,000-square-foot Armour Academic Center opened in fall 2009 and includes a humanities wing and a math and science wing. The four-level, LEED Gold certified building boasts state-of-the-art technology, abundant informal meeting spaces, and large windows. It also includes the Cole Library, study rooms, a 16-seat planetarium, a large lecture hall, and impressive labs.
The Brockelman Student Center and Grill opened in January 2018. The student center is located in the heart of the campus in Cushing Hall. The center has foosball, billiards, air hockey, two wall-mounted televisions (one can be used for gaming), and a lounge area that is often a hub of activity after school and on the weekends. Student can also enjoy snack items from the Brockelman Grill seven days a week.

The three-level 36,000-square-foot Armstrong Dining Hall, which opened at the beginning of the 2017-2018 academic year, features two dining rooms and two outdoor terraces and allows the entire school community to participate in family-style lunches four days a week.

Recently built student and faculty residences are in keeping with the Tudor-style architecture of the campus and feature a grand central staircase and two wings to create a vibrant living and learning community. Student bedrooms are clustered around a shared common room with faculty residences on each wing.

Sports and recreation facilities include 35 acres of playing fields, 14 tennis courts, a 400-meter synthetic track, eight international squash courts, an indoor hockey rink, a lighted synthetic turf field, baseball and softball fields, basketball courts, and an aquatic center that includes an eight-lane, 25-yard swimming and diving pool, a well-equipped fitness room and a professionally staffed Health Center.

**SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT**

A quintessential New England town with a population around 23,500, Simsbury is approximately 12 miles north of Hartford. The school is conveniently located halfway between New York City (120 miles) and Boston (110 miles), and Bradley International Airport is a short 20-minute drive away.
As recognized by Money magazine, Simsbury has “that special something that makes it a great place to live.” From a casual cup of coffee or slice of pizza with friends to a nice night out with parents, students enjoy spending time in town. A short distance from campus, the town is a place where students often run, walk, and bike on weekends. The centrality of Westminster’s location also means easy access for weekend outings to the movies, shopping, hiking, restaurants, performing arts venues, and more.

Simsbury is listed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of its “Dozen Distinctive Destinations.” Also, federally designated as a “Preserve America” community, the town features a charming downtown filled with historic homes and fine restaurants, while the farms and open space harken back to their agricultural roots. With hiking trails, a navigable river for nonmotorized vessels, a rails-to-trails bike path, and free visitor bike rentals, there are abundant outdoor recreational opportunities.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Westminster seeks an inspiring leader who will embody the core values of the school – community, character, balance, and involvement – and commitment to excellence. In alignment with the school’s focus on inclusivity, candidates should also champion a commitment to diversity, both in their personal values and their vision for secondary education.

The next Head of School will also need to:

• Show a dedicated commitment to preserving the outstanding sense of community that defines Westminster;
• Honor the longstanding traditions at Westminster while projecting a forward-thinking and relevant vision for the school moving forward;
• Reinforce and enhance Westminster’s commitment to equity and inclusion in all aspects of school life;
• Embrace the opportunity to be a highly visible member of the 24/7 community and engage fully in the life of the school;
• Lead Westminster’s ambitious advancement efforts, both locally and around the world;
• Navigate the pull between more specialized paths or experiences for students and a more common curricular and athletics experience;
• Inspire a large and diverse faculty while underscoring both accountability and autonomy as equally important;
• Collaborate effectively with the board of trustees;
• Understand the long-term goals of Westminster’s continued financial sustainability.

**DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

• An educator with a passion for inspiring, teaching, and coaching students. Experience working at a boarding school community is desirable;
• A collaborative and transparent leader who is open to diverse perspectives and will always make decisions in the best interest of the students and the school;
• A moral leader with a strong sense of integrity and fairness;
• An educator with a full appreciation for the deep commitment of the faculty who are the heart of the boarding school experience and fully dedicated to educating the whole child.
TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

• Cover letter expressing interest in this particular position;
• Current résumé;
• One or two writing samples related to the topics of leadership, secondary education, and/or community-building.

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