

# DEAN OF ADVANCEMENT SEARCH

## LAKE FOREST ACADEMY

Lake Forest, Illinois

[lfanet.org](http://lfanet.org)

**Start Date:** open until filled,  
can offer July of 2026



**Carney  
Sandoe**  
& ASSOCIATES

[CARNEYSANDOE.COM](http://CARNEYSANDOE.COM)

# Mission: Midwestern Heart / Global Mind

Lake Forest Academy strives to embody in its practices and to cultivate in its students excellence of character, scholarship, citizenship, and responsibility.

**Character** encompasses respect for others and their beliefs, dedication to honesty in every sphere of life, realization of moral clarity and conviction, and pursuit of virtue and value in life.

**Scholarship** encompasses acquisition of knowledge, development of critical thinking, enthusiasm for discovery and learning, and exercise of a powerful imagination.

**Citizenship** encompasses appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism, involvement in the LFA community, participation in service to others, and commitment to global awareness and understanding.

**Responsibility** encompasses development of self-reliance, ability to seek guidance, dedication to cooperation and teamwork, and action based upon informed decisions.

## At a Glance



Established  
**1857**



Enrollment  
**452**



Total faculty  
**86**



Student-faculty ratio  
**7:1**



Domestic students of color  
**39%**



Financial aid awarded  
**\$6.6M**



Faculty with advanced degrees  
**78%**



Campus size  
**150 acres**

States represented: 19  
Countries represented: 40  
International students: 110  
Boarding students: 50%  
Faculty of color: 32%

Students receiving aid: 33%  
Endowment: \$72M  
Advanced Placement courses: 24  
Annual operating budget: \$29M  
Varsity sports: 27

## NICHE Rankings

#1 Private School in Illinois  
#1 Boarding School in the Midwest  
#13 Boarding School in the Nation



## Overview

Founded in 1857, Lake Forest Academy (LFA) is an exceptional coeducational, college-preparatory boarding and day and school for grades 9–12. Located on a scenic campus in Lake Forest, Illinois, LFA has a rich tradition of academic excellence. The school serves 452 students from diverse backgrounds, fostering a dynamic learning community that blends rigorous academics, vibrant arts, competitive athletics, and meaningful extracurricular activities. As a global institution, LFA cultivates an environment where students grow into thoughtful, engaged, and ethical leaders. The Academy's mission emphasizes character development, intellectual curiosity, and the pursuit of lifelong learning, while its values include responsibility, empathy, inclusion, and a commitment to community well-being.

The city of Lake Forest is a picturesque and vibrant community nestled along the shores of Lake Michigan. Known for its natural beauty, the town boasts a harmonious blend of lush landscapes, historic architecture, and a strong commitment to preserving its natural environment. Tree-lined streets, stunning lakefront views, and a welcoming small-town charm make Lake Forest an ideal setting for Lake Forest Academy. LFA is at the heart of a vibrant educational community, surrounded by institutions such as Lake Forest Country Day School, Woodlands Academy, Lake Forest College, Northwestern University, and The University of Chicago.

Adding to its allure, Lake Forest is located just 30 miles north of downtown Chicago, providing easy access to one of the most dynamic cities in the world. The proximity to Chicago enriches the educational and cultural experiences of Lake Forest Academy's students, faculty, and families. Chicago's world-class museums, theaters, sports teams, and diverse culinary scene are just a short train or car ride away. This proximity allows the LFA community to benefit from the best of both worlds: the serenity and natural beauty of a close-knit community and the vibrancy of a global metropolitan hub.

Now, Lake Forest Academy seeks a Dean of Advancement with a strong record of dynamic leadership, strategic success, and fundraising achievement. Reporting to and partnering with the Head of School at LFA, the Dean of Advancement will be an experienced and passionate fundraising leader and program builder who will thrive working in an independent school environment. The successful candidate will be an engaging collaborator who will establish productive working relationships with the Head of School and the Board of Trustees, deans, faculty, and staff. In partnership with the Head of School, the Dean will create and execute a goal-oriented fundraising strategy to advance the Academy's mission and institutional vision of building sustainable philanthropic resources to support the academic program, financial aid, professional development, facility improvements and endowment growth. The Dean will identify, cultivate, and solicit major and planned gifts from the Academy's alumni and parents, involving the Head of School, trustees, and key volunteers, as appropriate. The successful candidate will continue the development of LFA's advancement program and lead a fundraising team focused on increasing revenue and exceeding constituency-related goals. The Dean will lead in a way that inspires individual and collaborative team performance. As a member of the Deans Council, the Dean of Advancement will collaborate with the other Deans in leading the school and implementing LFA's strategic plan.





## Opportunities and Challenges

With the recent appointment of long-serving faculty member Tom Johnson as Head of School, the Lake Forest Academy community is excited to enter a new chapter of strategic growth and philanthropic opportunities. The Dean of Advancement will work in close partnership with the Head of School, an experienced and committed Board of Trustees, and a dynamic senior leadership team to define LFA's advancement priorities and enhance community engagement. This is a unique opportunity to help shape a cohesive and innovative advancement strategy during a time of institutional renewal.

The Dean of Advancement will oversee and mentor a skilled ten-person team, and be tasked with building a culture of excellence, accountability, and collaboration to build a high-performing advancement program dedicated to increasing overall community engagement and philanthropic support. Under the incoming leadership, the advancement program will be able to establish stability, new organizational structures, and set clear goals and benchmarks for the program that are attainable and yet aspirational. The Dean of Advancement will be able to shape and share a compelling narrative that reflects LFA's marketplace strengths and values with a loyal parent, alumni, and capable donor base that is eager to have deeper engagement and a stronger connection to the philanthropic mission of the school.

The challenge for the incoming Dean of Advancement will be to establish and re-establish credibility and trust with the LFA constituency following a period of significant leadership transition. There is an exciting opportunity to partner closely with admissions, marketing and communications and the broader institution to ensure consistent and compelling messaging that aligns with the strength and joy of the student, parent, and alumni experience at LFA.

The successful candidate will be an experienced strategist and team-builder, a talented communicator, an accomplished fundraiser, and a natural relationship-builder, motivated by the challenge of institutional transformation and strategic community building.

## Primary Responsibilities

- Support and partner with the Head of School and the Board of Trustees on all major and planned giving initiatives and strategies.
- Initiate conversations with and provide strategies for LFA's senior and volunteer leadership in identifying, cultivating, soliciting, closing, and stewarding donors and prospects.
- Personally identify, cultivate, solicit, close, and steward gifts.
- Create and execute a strategic annual fundraising plan with clearly defined goals, timelines, and metrics.



- Oversee alumni and parent engagement programs and engage those constituencies in the life and future of the school.
- Build a high-performing advancement program and team with a focus on maximizing philanthropic revenue.
- Supervise, educate, and mentor members of the advancement team to achieve strategic goals.
- Bring creative, innovative and forward-thinking approaches to LFA's fundraising strategy and program that will elevate community wide philanthropic engagement.
- Establish policies for effective and appropriate management of LFA's advancement database.
- Create opportunities to collaborate with Deans and Faculty to link programs with philanthropic potential.
- Be an active member of the Deans Council, a supportive colleague, and an engaged member of the LFA community.

## Qualifications and Personal Attributes

- Commitment to the mission and values of Lake Forest Academy and the ability to support and communicate them effectively.
- Outstanding relationship-building and collaboration skills to work with a diverse community.
- Ten or more years of progressively successful advancement experience with a track record of building comprehensive fundraising programs and plans that achieve excellent results.
- Experience related to structuring and managing capital campaigns.
- Success in identifying, soliciting, securing, and stewarding a portfolio of donors.
- Knowledge of best practices in fundraising and the ability to apply them in innovative ways.
- A self-starter with a flexible and adaptable style to construct, articulate, and implement an annual advancement plan.
- Patience and persistence, with an ability to set ambitious, challenging, and tangible goals.

- Strong supervisory experience that demonstrates the ability to lead, mentor, and develop an advancement team to achieve the institutional goals of LFA's mission and strategic plan.
- Respect for diversity of identities and experiences combined with an orientation toward equity and inclusion in all aspects of Academy life.
- Sophisticated communication skills, both oral and written, and the capacity to tailor messaging to the needs and interests of all audiences.
- Experience with on-line fundraising and social media.
- Willingness to travel extensively to cultivate and solicit prospects and to steward donors.
- Experience working in an independent school or private college environment is preferable.
- Experience working with advancement database systems.
- Bachelor's degree required; master's preferred.

## Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Lake Forest Academy.

[School Website](#)

[Virtual Campus Tour](#)

[School History](#)

[College Matriculation](#)

[Inclusivity](#)

[About Chicago, Illinois](#)

## 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:

### **Jonathan Ball**

Managing Associate  
jball@carneysandoe.com

### **Sara Shulman**

Practice Leader – Development and Finance/Senior Consultant  
sara.shulman@carneysandoe.com

*The full-time equivalent salary range for this position is \$175,000-250,000. The starting salary is based upon, but not limited to, several factors that include years of experience, education level, and expertise.*