

ASPEN LEADERSHIP GROUP

CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

[CHOATE ROSEMARY HALL](#)

Wallingford, Connecticut



CHOATE
ROSEMARY HALL

The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with Choate Rosemary Hall in the search for a Chief Development Officer.

The Chief Development Officer will provide comprehensive leadership, management, and administration for Alumni Relations, Annual Fund (Alumni and Parent Giving), Development Communications, Information Resources, Major Gifts, and Planned Giving in support of the School's mission and attendant fundraising goals and objectives. The Chief Development Officer will create a climate for the giving, sharing, and stewardship of resources among the Choate Rosemary Hall alumni, parents, friends, foundations, faculty, staff, and greater community.

Choate Rosemary Hall is a co-educational boarding and day school for students grades nine through postgraduate, located in the scenic New England town of Wallingford, Connecticut. Choate is steadfast in its mission—students are prepared to seek knowledge for its own sake and to pursue further study at the finest colleges and universities. The School is dedicated to transformative student experiences, as well as cultivating a vibrant, cohesive, and authentic community that celebrates diversity and instills life-long habits of learning, leadership, and service—preparing these exceptional students to achieve success in all aspects of their lives.

Choate Rosemary Hall is the product of the merger of two separate schools. Rosemary Hall, a school for girls, was founded in 1890 by Mary Atwater Choate. In 1896, Mary's husband, Judge William G. Choate, established The Choate School for boys on the same family property in Wallingford. In 1900, Rosemary Hall moved its campus to Greenwich, and another 70 years would pass before Rosemary Hall "came home" to Wallingford. After the merger in 1974, the combined school built on the strengths of its common roots and shared purpose, inspiring excellence for future generations of students—rising to new levels of success, achievement, and recognition as a global leader in secondary education. With Choate's rich tradition at its core, the School balances those powerful traditions with fearless innovation—embracing the idea of "what's next."

With a spirit of change and maintaining the leading edge of teaching and learning practices, Choate supports its students today for the opportunities they will seize tomorrow. Open to learning during and beyond the class day, Choate's 458 acres, state-of-the-art facilities, and dedication to exceptionally transformative experiences offer their 868 students a path to discovery uniquely tailored to their talents and interests and fosters lifelong connections. Students from over 35 states and 35 countries experience an environment designed to lead them on a journey of exploration to new and unexpected places. With 300+ courses offered and a typical class size of 11 students, instruction in seven languages, immersion opportunities in eight signature programs, exceptional campus facilities, 80+ interscholastic teams, and 100+ student clubs and organizations, Choate students have countless opportunities to pursue their interests and passions well beyond the boundaries of a typical school day.

Choate honors its mission by providing intellectually talented students from various backgrounds an experience that enriches their lives and prepares them to contribute to an ever-changing world through innovative curriculum, guided independent learning, active campus engagement, and formation of character. At Choate, a student's ability to define their true and unique self is fundamental. Although no one accomplishment or interest will ever fully define who each student is as a person, the Choate experience will remain strong for life—one of big changes, and impressive transformations. *Exceptionally You, Uniquely Choate.*

LEADERSHIP

Alex Curtis, PhD

Head of School

Since coming to Choate Rosemary Hall in 2011, Dr. Curtis has made it his mission to support and advance the School, combining a forward-thinking approach to learning with the traditions that honor Choate's history. Guided by the School's foundational documents and strategic plans, Dr. Curtis has established Choate as an innovative leader committed to transformational student experiences.

Collaboration and community serve as the cornerstones for several capital projects undertaken during Dr. Curtis' tenure. Through the construction and renovation of LEED-certified buildings across campus—each of which supports collaborative learning spaces and communal gathering spaces—the School has demonstrated a tangible commitment to educational best practices and ongoing sustainability efforts. Projects include the Kohler Environmental Center (opened in 2012), the Cameron and Edward Lanphier Center for Mathematics and Computer Science (opened in 2015), St. John Hall student center (opened in 2017), Ann and George Colony Hall (opened in 2020), and the renovation and expansion of Hill House (opened in 2021).

Under his leadership, the School has also made tremendous strides toward becoming more technologically adept and accessible. The full adoption of a one-to-one iPad program for faculty and students, for example, has had a widespread effect on the success of on- and off-campus learning. Cultivating an ethos of experimentation, students and faculty are encouraged to use technology in a variety of ways across course work, activities and personal pursuits. By providing tools like the iPad and spaces like the i.d.Lab, technology is not just adopted, but adapted throughout a 21st century curriculum that highlights multidisciplinary opportunities in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.

This beneficial and intentional growth is echoed through Dr. Curtis' work with community and campus initiatives. Upon his arrival in 2011, he established the Task Force on Community to identify opportunities to strengthen the Choate experience for all constituents. In 2016, he established the Department of Equity and Inclusion, and he subsequently initiated a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force in 2020 as part of the School's commitment to fighting racial bias and inequality. Task Force work has provided a structured framework for Choate to build community, heighten community awareness, and recommit to the equity, inclusion, support, and success of students, faculty, staff, and alumni. This dedication to a culture of integrity, respect, and compassion is highlighted in the School's Statement of Expectations, created in 2013 as a campus-wide set of standards to be reviewed and committed to each year by every member of the community. Such attention to integrity and intentional growth in all initiatives has led to an increase in diversity for both the faculty and student bodies, and has also resulted in Choate's strengthened presence in current Admission markets and expansion into new ones. Beyond campus, Dr. Curtis is an active member of the boards of TABS (The Association Of Boarding Schools), CAIS (Connecticut Association of Independent Schools), and Fay School.

Dr. Curtis earned his doctorate from Princeton University's Department of Art and Archaeology. A lifelong teacher and learner, he still teaches Architectural History every spring term and is a constant presence on campus for students and adults alike. He can often be found on the paths on campus, walking with students or talking with faculty and staff. He is married to Dr. Elizabeth Fecko-Curtis and is the father of two sons, Morgan '17, and Sam '20.

FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

I am certain that I am biased in saying that this is an extraordinarily exciting opportunity for a seasoned development professional; I am also certain that it's true!

This seems to me the optimal moment to join the Choate Rosemary Hall community as our next Chief Development Officer. You'll be joining a highly successful team with a tremendous track record of raising funds, but you'll also be joining a team that is looking for new leadership, that is welcome to change, and eager for the enthusiasm that comes with fresh perspective. Honestly, we want to find someone who will put their own stamp on the office. We have had someone that has done a great job in their own unique way—but it was just that...their unique way. We don't expect to be able to replicate that; moreover, we don't want to do. We are excited by the opportunity to find someone with innovative ideas, strong organizational skills, a proven record of success, and the power to motivate donors and colleagues alike. In many ways, it is the ideal situation: there is no mess to clean up, no disasters going on, but also missing is any hint of complacency or desire to carry on with the status quo. Best of both worlds, I think!

You'll be heading a great office—full of talent and drive, and looking for thoughtful leadership. You'll also be joining a very strong administrative team—nine other experts in their respective fields whose collaborative and supportive nature is synergistic, and downright cool.

And, of course, you'll be working closely with me. Certainly, Heads of Schools and Chief Development Officers always work together closely—that isn't anything new. But what is new is Choate's Head of School and Head of Student & Academic Life structure that was specifically designed to allow me, as Head of School, to turn the majority of my focus externally: that is toward initiatives coming out of the development, admission, finance, and communication offices. With the Head of Student & Academic Life on campus and completely focused on the day-to-day running of the School, I am much more available to you and your team than most other heads are under the traditional structure. You can have me speak at alumni events, meet with potential donors, and join you at major donor solicitations. To be sure, we'll be hitting the pavement and the jet streams.

Given that we will be spending so much time together, a personal connection is extremely important to me. Traveling the world as we will be, I am looking for someone who has lots of good energy, but also appreciates that the demands of both of our jobs are immense, and that we must balance productivity with our personal health and wellness. I want that not just for me and you, but for all Choate employees. Health and happiness are essential to being successful. There is a humanity to working at Choate which needs to be fostered, encouraged, and maintained.

In short, I'm very excited about the search for our next Chief Development Officer; and if you are excited about the opportunity to join Choate in this capacity, then I look forward to meeting you. Let's get to work—that is the fun stuff, after all!

—Dr. Alex Curtis, Head of School

CHOATE ROSEMARY HALL'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Since 1989, when its first Office of Multicultural Affairs was created, Choate Rosemary Hall's commitment to diversity has remained a core value of the School. Through day-to-day activities, curriculum, and school-wide celebrations, it seeks to raise awareness and encourage understanding of differences of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic class, geographical origin, and sexual orientation. Furthermore, Choate Rosemary Hall is committed to examining its past and present in order to ensure that it creates in the future the most just, inclusive, and equitable Choate Rosemary Hall that it can.

Choate's Office of Equity and Inclusion continues to build upon the impressive groundwork of Driving Equity at Choate (now DEC) and the Choate Diversity Student Association, developing a school-wide approach to diversity, inclusion, and multicultural competence. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force served as a commitment to developing authentic, effective, and sustainable initiatives to ensure Choate Rosemary Hall creates the most just, inclusive, and equitable community possible. Under the leadership of Dr. Rachel Myers, Dean of Equity & Inclusion, an eleven-member staff and faculty group is developing a plan of action that spans all elements of school life.

Choate's upcoming Strategic Plan will further its existing strategic efforts to support students, staff, and faculty of color and ensure that they feel safe, included, valued, and seen within the school community. Beyond the Strategic Plan itself, the School is crafting an institutional statement about racial justice and its commitment to fighting bias and inequality. Choate's values run entirely counter to racialized violence, systemic injustice, and other forms of inequity, as articulated in core school documents. Choate has created a restricted fund, now named the Choate Fund for Justice, that exists solely to support non-profit organizations that work toward this goal, funded by individual donations. In concert with these concrete actions and strategic goals, Choate Rosemary Hall will redouble its efforts to confront and fight injustice in ways consistent with its institutional mission and values: by training adults, by supporting and educating students, and by equipping students and adults alike to make a difference both within and beyond the School's community.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Chief Development Officer (CDO) will report to the Head of School, Dr. Alex Curtis, and serve on the Senior Officers team. The CDO oversees an office of approximately 25 staff and is supported by the Director of Development and Alumni Relations who oversees the general operations of the office and a leadership team that includes the Director of Leadership and Annual Giving; Director of Development Communications; Director of Alumni Relations; and Director of Development Services.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Chief Development Officer will

- increase the School's financial resources through the planning, direction, implementation, and evaluation of Choate Rosemary Hall's fundraising programs including the annual fund, major gifts, planned giving, trustee giving, and campaign efforts to support programs, facilities, and the endowment;
- oversee the cultivation and solicitation of major and principal gifts, personally and in concert with other School leaders;
- work with the Director of Alumni Relations to develop and implement a plan for engaging alumni and parents personally and professional—including Choate's diverse constituencies;

- ensure that existing alumni relationships are maintained and deepened when possible, and that new relationships are sought with those not currently engaged;
- develop and implement a plan for engaging alumni and families, enhancing and deepening current philanthropic engagement approaches;
- work with the Director of Development and Alumni Relations to assess and strengthen all aspects of department operations, support efforts for the effective management of staff and workflows, and develop and oversee operating and campaign budgets;
- work with the Director of Leadership and Annual Giving to develop and execute comprehensive annual giving strategies that achieve goals for retention and growth in both donors and dollars, and increased support from alumni, parents, and families;
- with the Director of Development Communications, formulate messaging and outreach strategies that will result in stronger public awareness and a broader understanding of the value of philanthropic support of the School;
- provide oversight to parent and alumni relations and external affairs;
- in collaboration with the Director of Development Services, develop and maintain a comprehensive program for data management and be responsible for the creation of short- and long-term planning initiatives to improve and enhance products and services provided to both the division and the School, while ensuring the quality and timeliness of all fundraising data;
- serve as the staff representative to the Development Committee and Committee on Trusteeship; and
- review legacy and development candidates with the Chief Enrollment Manager.

PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Choate Rosemary Hall seek a Chief Development Officer with

- an appreciation of and commitment to the mission of Choate Rosemary Hall—to provide intellectually talented students from various backgrounds an experience that enriches their lives and prepares them to contribute to an ever-changing world through innovative curriculum, guided independent learning, active campus engagement, and formation of character;
- superior leadership skills and an ability to maintain the confidence of senior leadership and the Board of Trustees;
- highly refined relationship management skills and an ability to create messages that resonate with donors;
- a history of soliciting and closing gifts with significant institutional impact;
- experience working with highly engaged boards and staffing board committees;
- highly developed management and organizational skills;
- a collaborative approach with an ability to diplomatically address conflict;
- an ability to lead, inspire, and support a dedicated development team, and to delegate responsibility and prioritize projects;
- cultural competence and a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- excellent communications and presentation skills across platforms;
- knowledge of emerging development trends and best practices; and
- a robust understanding of planned giving and estate planning concepts and vehicles as well as donor advised funds.

A bachelor's degree is required for this position as is at least ten years of broad-based development experience in an independent secondary school, college, university, foundation or similar setting.

SALARY & BENEFITS

Choate Rosemary Hall offers a competitive salary and a comprehensive package of benefits.

LOCATION

Choate Rosemary Hall is located in Wallingford, Connecticut.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be responsive to the mission of Choate Rosemary Hall as well as the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

To apply for this position, visit:

[Chief Development Officer, Choate Rosemary Hall.](#)

To nominate a candidate, please contact Steven Wallace, stevenwallace@aspenleadershipgroup.com or Jeanette Rivera-Watts, jeanetterw@aspenleadershipgroup.com.

All inquiries will be held in confidence.