

Hunting Valley Campus Dean of Student Life (9-12)



Upper School Campus: Hunting Valley



New Academic Wing Under Construction

I. History and Description of the School

Founded in 1890, University School is a nationally recognized college preparatory school for approximately 870 boys. Originally located in downtown Cleveland, the initial curriculum involved a unique balance of liberal arts and manual arts. The sons of Cleveland's industrial barons, so the thinking went, needed an Ivy League preparation in the classroom while also gaining an understanding of wood working and metal smithing in order to understand manufacturing and industrial production. As part of the legacy, the wrought iron gates which still grace the entrance to one of our campuses and the three magnificent weather vanes on the rooftops were handmade by students.

Over the course of the past century, the school expanded, moved out of the city, and is now located on two campuses. The Shaker Heights campus (K-8), built in 1925, sits on 35 acres in a tranquil, yet cosmopolitan and distinctive community eight miles from downtown Cleveland. The Hunting Valley campus (9-12), built in 1970, makes great use of its more than 220 wooded acres with playing fields, a trout hatchery, and a maple syrup operation.

University School is a boys' school by design, not by accident. We believe boys thrive in a community that understands how they learn best and responds accordingly with a developmentally appropriate curriculum and school culture. The US faculty and staff understand and appreciate what makes boys tick, and our teaching practices and curriculum are based on this understanding.

At the primary level (K-5), the curriculum is theme based, so that mathematics, language arts, science and social studies are taught in an integrated fashion through a series of themes. Recent themes have included Mexico, Japanese and European feudal culture, the New England whaling industry, the Renaissance in Italy, Chinese Civilization, the culture and religion of Sikhs in India, the City of Paris. Spanish instruction begins in

the early primary years, with additional options for French and Latin at the middle school level, and adding Chinese and Greek at the upper school.

The academic program in grades 6-8 is increasingly challenging while remaining imaginative and developmentally appropriate. Though the boys are becoming more self-reliant and disciplined both in their behavior and study habits, we still see middle school as a time for direct guidance, core skill building, and active mentoring. As well, in order to address this dynamic growth period and drive for autonomy that is characteristic of this stage of development, classroom experiences begin to stress higher-order analysis, systems thinking, the relevance of content to current issues, and the authentic application of key communication and problem solving skills.

The Upper School program takes a rigorous, more traditional, college prep approach with a full array of AP courses. Though even with the pressure to build a transcript with college admission in mind, the Upper School arts program is thriving, and we offer multiple opportunities for experiential learning, independent study, and project based initiatives during a boy's high school years.

University School has a long-held commitment to globalism and is a founding member of the International Boys' School Coalition, hosting the Coalition's second conference in 1995. Boys have opportunities to take advantage of rich relationships with schools and institutions in Latin America, China and Africa. They can participate in a service-learning trip to an orphanage in Honduras, an exchange program with China and Botswana, a sailing trip across the Great Lakes and into Canada, a trip to Northern Ireland focused on conflict resolution, and language trips to Italy, France, and Spain. With our roots in the city of Cleveland, we have also been keenly interested in and devoted to serving the city, both through our service programs and through a strong financial aid budget that allows us to open our doors to a wide range of families, reflecting the socioeconomic diversity of the city.

The most significant recent building initiative is the groundbreaking for our \$27 million academic wing at the upper school. As a sign of the financial strength of the institution and the support of our parents and alums, the entire \$27 million dollars was raised before construction began.

Mission

The US faculty takes great pride in our mission statement. Its concise powerful message is operative in the day-to-day life of the school, and the core notion of "knowing and loving" each boy is at the heart of the institutional culture.

The mission of University School is to develop promising and motivated boys into accomplished and independent young men who aspire to make a difference in the world. The school is rigorous. Our programs, led by challenging and supportive faculty, promote intellectual, physical, creative and moral excellence. We believe these goals are best achieved in a community where tradition is valued and where every boy is known and loved.

II. General Job Description of the Dean of Student Life – Hunting Valley Campus

Position Description:

Reporting directly to the Campus Head, the Dean of Student Life represents an exciting leadership opportunity for a rising administrator who is seeking a challenge. The Dean of Student Life is a key member of a leadership trio, consisting of the Campus Head, the Dean of Student Life, and the Dean of Faculty, who, for all intents and purposes, are responsible for and run the daily life of the campus. Unlike other school structures, this position not only oversees discipline and accountability but also contributes at a much higher level to the overall school direction and school culture.

The Dean of Student Life is responsible first and foremost for the welfare and wellbeing of the student body. The Dean of Student Life works to establish a safe and supportive environment that is conducive to the healthy growth and development of boys as they become young men. The concluding language in our mission statement captures the spirit of this critically important administrative position. We believe that the collective goal of promoting intellectual, physical, creative, and moral excellence in our students is **“best achieved in a diverse community where tradition is valued and where every boy is known and loved.”**

The Dean of Student Life is responsible for supporting, guiding, and advocating for students, and aims to encourage and sustain a positive, healthy student culture. Being an advocate for students – especially students ‘at risk’ and whose judgment is still maturing – comes in a variety of forms. Holding students accountable for their actions through our discipline system and also understanding the need for emotional support for boys experiencing difficulty are not mutually exclusive endeavors, and in fact, managing this duality is essential to the job. The Code of Conduct is at the heart of student accountability, and there is a simple clarity in adhering to the core notions of integrity and respect.

The Dean of Student Life is responsible for the quality of the student advisory program (known as “sponsoring” at US) in order to ensure a safe and supportive environment. The Dean of Student Life clarifies to members of the faculty the high professional standards that apply to being a sponsor, and through formal and informal evaluations, ensures that members of the faculty meet those standards.

The student body is divided into ten houses that form part of the fabric of school life through friendly competition and rivalry. A house affiliation gives each boy a sense of belonging, and in addition, much of the job of sponsoring and mentoring a boy is done by the teachers assigned to a given house under the supervision of a housemaster. The Dean of Student Life oversees this “House System” in close consultation with the ten housemasters, who together form the Student Life Committee.

An organized and effective communicator, the Dean of Student Life models professional standards and commitment as he or she teaches, coaches, sponsors, and pursues other duties in the school.

A member of the Upper School Administrative Team, the Dean of Student Life collaborates closely with the Director of the Upper School, the Dean of Faculty, the Assistant Dean of Student Life, the Athletic Director, and the Director of Admissions to oversee the daily life of the school. This team routinely meets at 7:00 each weekday morning to review and anticipate events in the school.

Primary Areas of Responsibility:

- **Student discipline and accountability**
 - Clarify to the school community rules and consequences associated with our Code of Conduct, especially regarding issues of integrity, respect, and tolerance
 - Supervise the Advisor to the Student Disciplinary Committee (SDC) and oversee the quality and consistency of the disciplinary process, including the consistency and fairness of the outcomes
 - Consult closely with the Advisor to the SDC in orienting student members
 - Consult closely with the Advisor to the SDC and student members of the SDC in the event of a rule infraction
 - Conduct initial interviews of students in disciplinary difficulty, communicate with families in a timely manner regarding the disciplinary process in the event of a major violation, offer guidance to boys and their families during a disciplinary proceeding, handle all follow-up communication and documentation of major disciplinary events.
 - Oversee and maintain the smooth running of our detention system
 - Oversee and maintain routine day-to-day discipline, including attendance, dress-code, and general student conduct and decorum in school and at all school events.

- **Guidance**
 - Oversight of the House System
 - Professional development and training of Housemasters and Sponsors
 - Evaluation of Housemasters and Sponsors
 - Orientation of students new to US and careful collaboration with Middle School Director on the smooth transition of boys coming to Hunting Valley from the Shaker Campus.
 - Orientation and training of student prefects
 - Work closely with Upper School Learning Specialist in creating supportive strategies to help students in academic difficulty
 - Work closely with school psychologist in supporting students experiencing emotional or behavioral difficulty
 - Be a resource to parents, teachers, coaches, and sponsors when they are having difficulty with a boy in the classroom, on a team, or in school in general

- **Collaboration with the Parent Body**
 - Reinforce the important relationship between school and parents by communicating with parents on issues relating to student discipline and accountability as well as all the various aspects of student guidance and support. This comes in the form of new family orientation, parent coffees, and various information sessions in collaboration with the USPA.
 - Be a support and a resource to parents whose sons are experiencing various crises or disruptions in their school lives
 - When possible and appropriate, be a support and a resource to parents whose families are experiencing crises outside of a school context

- **Other duties and projects as assigned by the Headmaster**

Direct Supervision:

With the support of the Campus Head and in collaboration with the Dean of Faculty, the Dean of Student Life supervises the Housemasters and supports their work as they ensure the highest quality of sponsorship and mentorship of the boys.

The Dean of Student Life chairs the Student Life Committee, comprised of the ten housemasters. This body presides over and is responsible for student life outside the classroom in much the same way that the Curriculum Committee presides of the academic life of the school. The Dean of Student Life should urge a robust dialogue about student culture, decorum, and discipline and consult closely with housemasters on key matters of student life.

While granting a degree of autonomy to the Advisor to the SDC and to the students serving on the SDC to ensure an independent-minded judiciary, the Dean of Student Life supervises the Advisor to the SDC and is responsible for the consistency and quality of the disciplinary process.

The Dean of Student Life advises, supervises, and consults with student prefects. This includes overseeing the selection and orientation of new prefects. Absent a student government, the Dean of Student Life works closely with the prefects to ensure that a student perspective is considered carefully on matters pertaining to student life at school.

With the interest of the boys in mind, the Dean of Student Life assists the Athletic Director and the Dean of Faculty in ensuring that coaches live the Mission by helping boys to grow into young men of character and integrity through lessons learned in athletic competition.

III. Profile of an Effective Candidate

The ideal candidate will have a passion for school life, administrative experience, and significant practical experience working in the area of adolescent development. A graduate degree and classroom teaching experience are preferred.

The candidate will be a skilled communicator, both in writing and public speaking, and be able to address a wide range of constituencies that include students, teachers, and parents. The candidate will be an attentive and supportive listener, skilled mediator, and decisive decision maker when working with students, teachers, and parents.

An understanding of the need to balance firm decisiveness in disciplinary matters with compassion for adolescent foibles and imperfections is critically important

Finally the candidate will need a sense of humor, an appreciation for the untidiness of the process of growing up, and a natural ability to connect with adolescent boys, whose job it is, at times, to push boundaries and endlessly try the patience of the adults who care for them.

IV. Compensation and Benefits

The salary for the Dean of Students is competitive and based on years of experience and expertise. The benefits package includes a generous retirement plan, health and dental coverage, life insurance and tuition remission for faculty sons. It is a full-time, twelve-month position beginning July 1, 2012.

US is an equal opportunity employer and strives to provide a work environment that welcomes diversity.

IV. Applying for the Position

Interested candidates with questions are encouraged to contact Bill O'Neil, Head of the Hunting Valley Campus (woneil@us.edu), Patrick Gallagher, Dean of Faculty (pgallagher@us.edu), or Stephen Murray, Headmaster at 216-831-2211 (smurray@us.edu).

Candidates wishing to apply should send a cover letter, résumé, personal statement and list of references to Debbie Linich (dlinich@us.edu) at University School:

University School
2785 SOM Center Road
Hunting Valley, Ohio 44022
216-831-2200