



Respect. Responsibility. Integrity. Courage. Compassion.

Girard College President

Philadelphia, PA

Background

Girard College is a place that speaks to Philadelphia's historic past as well as the promise of its future. Located on a sprawling 43-acre campus in North Philadelphia, Girard is home to a full-scholarship, grades 1-12 residential boarding school for children from single-parent families with limited financial resources.

During the course of its 173-year history, Girard College has earned a reputation as a school that produces great students and good citizens, in accordance with the dictates of its founder, Stephen Girard, a shipping magnate and financier who by the time of his death in 1831 had become the wealthiest man in America. Under the terms of his 300-page will, Mr. Girard left bequests for a range of charitable causes, but by far the largest portion of his estate was set in trust to build and operate a boarding school for white male orphans.

More than 20,000 students have passed through the gates of Girard College since its founding, all of whom have been beneficiaries of fully-funded scholarships that today are valued at approximately \$65,000 a year. The school's original racial restrictions were successfully challenged and overturned in 1968, by which time the College became the focal point of Philadelphia's civil rights movement in the 1960s. Led by legendary local attorney Cecil B. Moore, the protests featured national civil rights leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and scores of local "Freedom Fighters" who marched around the 10-foot wall that marks the College's perimeter. Gender restrictions were dropped in 1984, when the school first admitted female students.

Today, Girard embraces its history and is simultaneously focused on leveraging resources and seizing opportunities to meet the moment and lead, as it continues to deliver on its promise to educate children from limited financial circumstances. With a student enrollment of approximately 300 children, Girard features a 100% college acceptance rate and continues to provide guidance and support for its students during and even after graduation with a range of scholarship opportunities that help them become lifelong learners and productive public citizens.

Opportunity for Impact

Girard has endured significant challenges over the last decade, both financial (in the wake of the 2009 recession) and operational, as the College struggled, like schools across America, to educate its students in the midst of the COVID

pandemic. Yet for all its challenges, Girard today is positioned to launch the next great chapter of its storied history. As we emerge from the pandemic, there is renewed energy and momentum, together with a palpable sense of hope and anticipation as we await the selection of the College's next leader.

There is a singular opportunity for the next Girard President to impact the school's future, thanks in large part to the following factors and progress against its [strategic plan](#). Currently Girard College enjoys:

- Growing financial resources, thanks to the Estate's outstanding management and investment practices, that will be made available for program and long-awaited capital improvements;
- A redesigned high school curriculum that includes newly-developed student learning experiences to maximize social impact;
- Greater partnerships with leading Philadelphia institutions and businesses to improve academic options for students while raising Girard's profile in the community;
- Continuing discussions about expanding the school's educational mission to serve pre-K and Kindergarten students;
- The development of a trauma-informed counseling team to support students' mental health;
- A labor situation (there are three different unions representing Girard's 150+ full-time employees) that is more stable than at any time in the last 15 years, even as Girard remains in discussion with its faculty to secure a new agreement;
- Long-awaited renovations to its signature building, Founder's Hall, as well as other residential buildings, and plans for additional capital expenditures are under consideration, and
- Ongoing review to identify additional program and service gaps that will enhance the students' educational and residential experience.

Put simply, Girard College is positioned to become a model of community-based residential school excellence under the guidance of its next leader.

Role and Responsibilities

The next President will work closely with the Board of Directors of City Trusts, which administers the Girard Trust that funds the bulk of the school's operations, with a goal to partner collaboratively with the school's leadership team, faculty and staff to achieve its ambitious goals. Specific responsibilities include:

Organizational Vision & Leadership

- Clarify and communicate the vision, values, brand and identity of Girard College, ensuring internal alignment and buy-in as well as clear messaging across the broader, external, Girard College community
- In collaboration with both the Girard College Committee and the Board, execute the current multi-year strategic plan and realize its annual academic, financial, operational, and fundraising metrics and outcomes; lead the development and execution of next and subsequent strategic plans
- Execute effective accountability systems to meet and exceed goals, and ensure operations are financially sound, legally compliant, and safe and supportive of students
- Promote the innovation, testing, and scaling of new solutions that drive student development and achievement
- Maintain high visibility and cultivate relationships at every level of the Girard College community
- Inspire all members of the community with Girard's success stories, goals, plans and results

Talent

- Build a culture of excellence, collegiality, transparency, integrity and innovation
- Attract, support, and retain a strong and diverse leadership team
- Oversee a talent strategy that ensures that Girard College can retain the most dedicated and effective members of its team, as well as recruit, retain, and develop high performers at every level
- Actively model, engage and lead efforts to implement diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism goals and strategy to ensure that all constituencies have voice and opportunity to influence the College's work
- Foster collaboration, partnership, and communication at all levels across the organization to maximize productivity, ensure professional excellence and promote teamwork

External Relationships and Presence

- Attract and nurture new and existing philanthropic relationships while increasing Girard College's capacity for fundraising and development
- Build on existing partnerships with key local and national leaders, community-based organizations, government and authorizing officials, and national education organizations

Qualifications

Above all, the next President will have a natural inclination to a positive presence and will know and be known by students and their families, while working as well to support and strengthen the contributions and success of all Girard stakeholders. Embracing Girard's history, the next President will co-create and hold a vision for themselves and the institution that delivers short-term restorative wins and realizes longer term aspirations and the vast potential of the institution.

Additionally, the successful candidate will bring to the role the following **professional experience**:

- Achieving results as a senior leader in a large, complex and fast-paced organization, including substantive contributions to developing and executing long term strategic plans
- Fostering an inclusive and equitable culture by articulating an inspiring vision
- A track record of attracting, motivating and developing high-performing teams of both academic and operations staff, union and non-union members
- Activating and engaging the Board collaboratively and productively
- Overseeing a multi-million-dollar budget
- Executing effective community outreach and engagement resulting in productive relationships
- A Master's Degree; Ph.D. preferred

Further, the successful candidate will possess the following **skills**:

- An adaptive leadership style and comfort with distributed leadership
- Seasoned people management skills, methods and sensibilities, including the ability to develop team members alongside existing accountability and performance management structures
- The ability to drive the creation of a viable, long term financial plan and sustainable funding base from individuals, foundations, and corporations
- Excellent listening and communications skills

- The ability to develop and improve systems that support education-related program efficiency, effectiveness and performance management

Next, the successful candidate must possess these *personal characteristics*:

- Passion for Girard College’s mission and impact and demonstrated alignment with Girard College’s values
- Demonstrable professional maturity coupled with a reputation for having a high emotional intelligence
- A style that models inclusivity, collegiality, transparency, excellence, integrity, and innovation

Reporting Relationships

The President reports to the Girard College Committee and, ultimately, the Board of Directors of City Trusts.

Compensation

The compensation for the President role is highly competitive and includes comprehensive benefits.

To Apply

Applications will be considered on a rolling basis beginning immediately, and continue until the position is filled. *For best consideration, please submit a cover letter and resume to girardcollegepresidentsearch@promise54.org by January 31, 2022.*

We believe that diversity is strength, and we are committed to inclusivity. We are an equal-opportunity employer and welcome all qualified applicants.