

CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER AT WALNUT HILL

Start Date: July 1, 2026



WALNUT HILL SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

Natick, Massachusetts
walnuthillarts.org

EST.  1893
WALNUT HILL
SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

Walnut Hill School for the Arts

Mission Statement

Walnut Hill School for the Arts educates and trains creative and intellectually curious young artists to make an enduring impact in the world.

Motto

Non Nobis Solum (“Not for Ourselves Alone”)

Core Values

Community, Creativity, Excellence, Growth, Respect

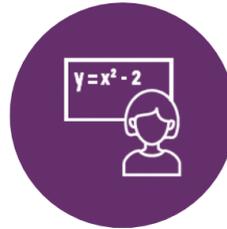
At a Glance



Established
1893



Enrollment
247



Total Faculty
41



Student-Teacher Ratio
7:1



Boarding Students
70%



Students of Color
48%



Financial Aid Awarded
\$5M



International Students
30%

Faculty of Color: 24%

Faculty with Advanced Degrees: 68%

Students Receiving Aid: 42%

Endowment: \$17M

Annual Operating Budget: \$21M

Campus Size: 30 Acres



Introduction

Walnut Hill School for the Arts seeks an innovative and visionary fundraising leader to advance the future of philanthropy for this global leader in arts education, one of only three independent boarding arts high schools in the U.S. As a key member of the Head of School's cabinet, the Chief Development Officer serves as an influential strategist and tactician in advancing the School's fundraising aspirations, constituent engagement, and institutional priorities. This is a once-in-a-career opportunity for an advancement professional to serve a highly regarded, mission-driven day and boarding school that is developing some of the world's most promising young artists.

School Overview

Located 17 miles west of Boston on a 30-acre campus, Walnut Hill School for the Arts combines a comprehensive college-preparatory academic curriculum with intensive, pre-professional artistic training in Theater, Dance, Music, Visual Art, and Writing, Film and Media Arts. The School's expert faculty and staff work with students in their respective majors to strengthen their talents, foster their creativity, and stimulate their creativity. Walnut Hill has an outstanding college preparatory academic program that is uniquely tailored for young artists, focusing on depth, critical thinking, and collaboration. Walnut Hill has strategic partnerships with New England Conservatory and Boston Ballet,

and is the only school of its kind in a major metropolitan market. Additionally, it has a String Quartet in Residence – the Grammy-winning Parker Quartet whose members are also Professors of the Practice at Harvard University.

In addition to being a secondary school, Walnut Hill provides a variety of community and summer programs, including its Community Academy that offers both school year and summer learning opportunities for local aspiring artists, pre-K through adult. It also has an international footprint in Seoul, South Korea through the Walnut Hill School for the Arts Jongno Art Hall which serves as a “home base” for WHS families and alumni in Seoul, the school’s second largest international family/alumni base.

School History

Founded in 1893 by two Wellesley College graduates, Walnut Hill School was at the forefront of educating young women until the 1970s when the arts – always recognized as a vibrant aspect of school programming – became a strategic focus along with a co-educational mission. Today, alumni include world-renowned musicians and composers, symphony conductors, principal dancers, visual artists, Broadway performers, TV/film actors, producers, and a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Poet Laureate. In addition, Walnut Hill graduates are at the top of many creative industries, including design, fashion, architecture, technology, entrepreneurship, and medicine, among others.

As the school has evolved, it has continued to innovate. Over the past decade, Walnut Hill has become a national leader in Community and Belonging work. Accomplishments include the first gender-neutral dorm in the U.S., a blossoming of student and adult affinity groups, and adoption of Restorative Practices to repair harm between students and colleagues and forge a new idea of what “discipline” means in a school. This work is essential to serving 250 students hailing from 28 states and territories and nearly 20 countries. Uniquely diverse, nearly half of Walnut Hill’s student body is represented by students of color. The School celebrates individuality, embraces differences, promotes excellence, and fosters a highly inclusive and supportive culture.

Current Climate

Following a leadership transition to a new Head of School in the fall of 2022, the Board of Trustees and the new Head embarked on a process to develop a forward-thinking multiyear Strategic Plan. Under the oversight of a Strategic Planning Committee supported by outside counsel, five design teams made up of Trustees, faculty, and staff worked on developing key priority areas. And in September 2023, the Board approved five strategic priority areas, as well as an action plan for the first two years of work in advancing these key initiatives:

1. Expand and Strengthen the Financial Resource Pipeline
2. Expand our Reach as a Global Leader in the Arts
3. Transform Walnut Hill’s Arts and Academic Education
4. Fortify a Culture of Wellness and Belonging
5. Create a Campus Master Plan to Meet the Planned and Aspirational Goals for the School.

Leadership

Walnut Hill's administrative leadership team is composed of a dynamic group of professionals who are accomplished in their respective fields. The team includes the Head of School; Assistant Head of School; Chief Financial & Operating Officer; Chief Development Officer; Dean of Students; Director of Community & Belonging; Director of Enrollment Management; Director of Strategic Marketing & Communications; and Executive Assistant to the Office of the Head of School.

Eric Barber, Head of School

Eric Barber was named Walnut Hill School for the Arts' 13th Head of School in July 2022. He brings more than two decades of leadership experience at independent schools that have birthed new ideas and programs; championed holistic, student centered learning; supported health and wellbeing of all community members; and actively reached outside the school community to improve access and equity. An accomplished saxophonist, Eric also brings the perspective of being a current working artist.

Eric joined Walnut Hill from Crossroads School for Arts and Sciences, an urban, nationally recognized, K-12 day school of 1,200 students in Los Angeles, where as Director of Enrollment Management, he was responsible for positioning the school in the highly competitive market of West Los Angeles. He also was deeply involved in the School's strategic, financial, and future planning.

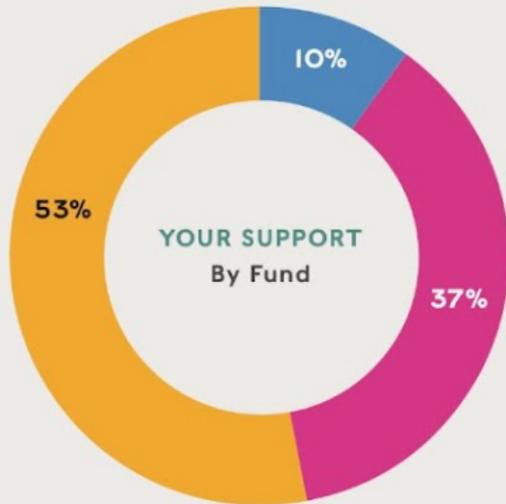
Prior to his time in LA, Eric worked in the Pacific Northwest serving in senior admissions roles at two other independent schools, developing an expertise in enrollment management, marketing and identity development, and reputational management. During this time, he also established Puget Sound Independent Schools, a non-profit regional admissions consortium of 40 independent schools; while also continuing to perform as a musician, earning the prestigious Northwest Instrumentalist of the Year award in 2009 by Earshot Jazz.

Eric holds a BA in Music from the University of Oregon and an MFA in Jazz and African-American Music from California Institute of the Arts. An active member of the Enrollment Management Association (EMA), Eric served as a co-chair of the Admissions Leadership Council, as a faculty member at the Admissions Training Institute, and as a member of the Character Task Force.

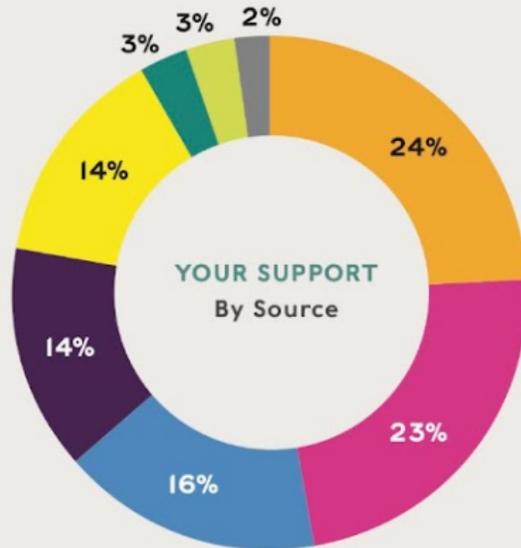


CHARITABLE GIVING

Total for 2024–25



- Unrestricted
- Capital / Project Specific
- Endowment



- Alumni
- Board
- Current Parents
- Parents of Alumni
- Friends
- Organizations
- Faculty/Staff
- Other

CASH TOTALS FOR 2024–25

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND RESTRICTED | \$634,764

- Theater Technology Upgrades: LED Wall & Rigging System
- Master Plan Capital Fund
- Guest Artist Series
- Piano Excellence Fund
- WFMA Creative Technologies Fund
- Linda Lifsey Hughes Fund for Inclusion
- Current Use Financial Aid

UNRESTRICTED | \$1,408,999

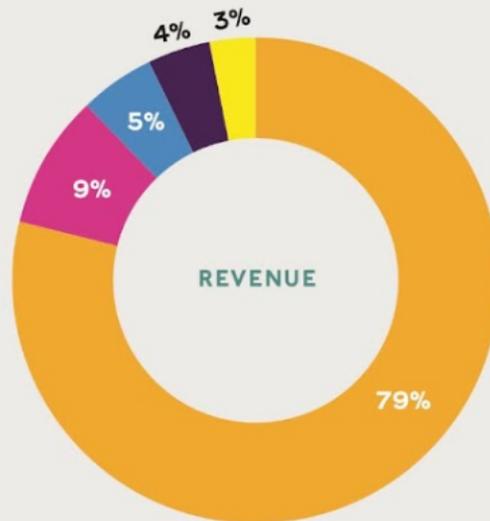
ENDOWMENT & SCHOLARSHIP | \$202,494

- Linda Lifsey Hughes Endowed Fund
- Cabral Merit Scholarship for Excellence in Theater
- The Antonio Viva Fund
- Catherine Nelson Nevius Scholarship Fund
- Agneta Mead Scholarship Fund

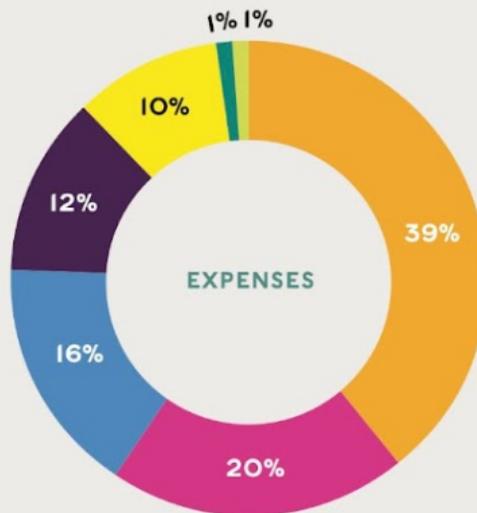
REVENUE & EXPENSES

for 2024–25

As percentage of the Operating Budget



- Tuition and Fees
- Current Use Giving
- Other Income
- Endowment Support
- Auxiliary Program Income



- Salaries & Benefits
- Financial Aid
- Facilities
- Instructional & Student Support
- School Operations
- Interest & Other Expense
- Auxiliary Programs

Philanthropy at Walnut Hill

Over the years, Walnut Hill's philanthropy program has supported the School's operating costs as well as its strategic and growth goals, raising monies for capital improvements, endowment, and the Affordability Program (financial aid). The Annual Fund generates approximately \$1.5 million per year for current use. Walnut Hill's Ellison Society recognizes donors who have committed to legacy gifts to the School's endowment, currently valued at \$20 million. This Society was named in honor of Beatrice J. Edgerly Ellison of the Class of 1911, whose charitable remainder trust bequeathed a gift of \$1.18 million. This planned giving effort has grown modestly to 200+ members with gifts ranging from \$3,000 to \$3 million.

The following initiatives are some of the highlights of philanthropy over the years:

- The Linda Lifsey Hughes Funds – Two funds that serve students in helping to purchase school needs such as arts supplies, clothes, and technology with the addition of an ongoing endowment for the School
- The Antonio Viva Fund – An annual fund in honor of Walnut Hill's 12th Head of School with the mission of bolstering its existing efforts to create a just and inclusive culture and to attract and support a diverse range of students, faculty, and staff
- "Investing in Walnut Hill's Next 125 Years" (2018) – Annual "mini" campaign that celebrated the school's 125th anniversary through a series of regional and international fundraising events focused on "Arts, Hearts, Smarts, and School"
- "Securing Our Place in the World" (2012-2017) – A six-goal strategic plan supported by a comprehensive campaign, "Invest in Excellence: Front & Center"
- "Invest in Excellence: Front & Center" (Public launch, October 2016) – A comprehensive campaign that raised \$16.3 million for campus facilities, endowment, and financial aid. At its core was the design and construction of the Delbridge Family Center for the Arts, an \$8.5 million, 18,000-square-foot multi arts performance center that includes the Mollie T. & John Byrnes Performance Studio
- "Rising to the Challenge of Success" (2005-2010) – Included "The Fund for the Future," a \$20 million comprehensive campaign that benefited arts programming, financial aid, faculty salaries, and student expansion (to 320) with the construction of Bishop Hall
- "Path to Preeminence" (1999-2005) – Fueled the school's upward trajectory and secured a more diverse and stronger community
- "Our Place on the Hill" (1994-1998) – Focused on facilities, financial aid, and faculty compensation
- "The Centennial Plan" (1986-1994) – Growth phase that solidified the arts mission and the co-educational experience



The Next Leap Forward

The fundraising program, guided by a new Chief Development Officer (CDO), will join the School after a strategic sea change in fund development and constituent engagement. Accomplishments over the past two years include: reimagining the Development architecture and strategy; assessing/analyzing data and opportunities; and leveraging the School's brand and key messaging to further fundraising objectives. The staffing, data hygiene, plan, and strategy have all been built effectively and are now poised to generate higher fundraising results and firmly establish a culture of philanthropy at Walnut Hill. Walnut Hill is unique among independent schools to appeal as a strong case for support to Boston arts and culture philanthropists. The School has key initiatives in process to harness philanthropic opportunities across the Boston arts landscape. The next CDO will formally launch and steward these initiatives, which will result in the acquisition of new leadership donors to the School.

In addition to the reimagining of the Development function, Walnut Hill has reorganized the Marketing and Communication department, now led by a Director with a deep acumen in digital marketing, website development, national and international publicity, and strategic communications. The new CDO will work very closely with this peer position, as well as with the Director of Enrollment Management, to leverage the School's brand and key messaging to further strategic fundraising and enrollment objectives.

These efforts represent an exceptional opportunity for the CDO to take Walnut Hill in a new and inspiring direction, with substantial latitude to craft the pathway forward with sound recommendations from professional counsel and a commitment from the HoS and Board Leadership to broaden the School’s philanthropic culture and reach.

Staffing

In managing a best-practice fundraising program, the CDO optimizes the human, financial, and creative resources of the department to achieve this aspirational next chapter. The philanthropy team includes the CDO, Director of Annual and Leadership Giving, Associate Director of Annual and Leadership Giving, Director of Development Operations, Development Events Manager, and Development Assistant. Walnut Hill also utilizes consultants for key written communication such as appeals and School publications like the alumni magazine. This structure has been refined multiple times to find the best match between constituent needs and the School’s fundraising and engagement goals.

Organizational Charts & Responsibilities



Chief Development Officer

Position Description

The CDO serves as a key thought partner to the Head of School in strategically increasing philanthropic support to advance the School's mission and vision for the future. As an important member of the senior leadership team, the CDO will work closely with the Board of Trustees, articulating a vision of philanthropy to current families, alumni, and current and future donors; playing a critical role advancing the School's reputation and most importantly, actively cultivating, soliciting, and closing transformational gifts.

Positionally, the CDO, Head of School, and Board of Trustees will execute a "pathway to eminence" that will result in Walnut Hill attracting substantial philanthropic support by positioning itself as an arts entity worthy of support from arts benefactors and major foundations in key metropolitan markets. This is a very rare position for an independent school to occupy; essentially behaving as much like a symphony or ballet company as it does a school, increasing the potential to secure transformational gifts.

The CDO will create and execute Walnut Hill's overall fundraising and engagement strategies investing in deep partnerships with the Strategic Marketing and Enrollment Management teams. Collaboration with other areas of the School will be critical as well, including arts and academic departments, senior leadership, the business office, deans, faculty, staff, parent/guardians, and students.

Primary Responsibilities:

Fundraising, Vision, and Stewardship

- Engage with the Head of School in high-level strategic thinking to grow and optimize the School's overall development efforts, as well as for key initiatives such as the launch of Walnut Hill's strategic plan;
- Serve as a lead front-line fundraiser. Develop and manage a significant personal portfolio of highly-rated prospects and donors, including cultivation, solicitation, and maintaining accountability for revenue expectations; work toward achievement of annual success metrics (e.g., donor meetings, prospect identification/qualification, gift closure);
- Devise, implement, and manage effective and complex strategies to secure principal gifts (6-7+ figures) for capital and programmatic priorities, along with appropriate and timely cultivation and stewardship;
- Understand the lifecycle of each Walnut Hill constituent to curate a relevant, meaningful, and mission-inspiring set of touchpoints and experiences with the goal of proximal engagement and philanthropy;
- With Head of School and Board committee involvement, develop, test, and refine a compelling case for support and related messaging to position Walnut Hill as an organization deserving of transformative philanthropy;
- In collaboration with the Head of School, establish a rubric of metrics that determine the effectiveness of the School's philanthropy programming; and

execute a data-driven approach to planning, reporting on, and measuring results, identify key opportunities for improvement, and address obstacles to fundraising performance.

Supervision & Department Management

- Balance travel and front-line work with staff oversight, ensuring a well-run office with effective cultivation and stewardship of prospects and donors;
- Supervise, coach, and provide vision to the department to build a strong, collaborative team that serves the high-level goals of the school;
- Meet regularly with staff, providing ongoing and constructive feedback and support, and identifying opportunities for professional growth; mentor and develop staff, adjusting and aligning job responsibilities and contracted work, ensuring alignment with the School's strategic priorities; conduct annual evaluations and reviews per the School's performance evaluation process;
- Manage the budget, prioritizing all resources for a strategic ROI;

Community Involvement & Engagement

- Be visible in the school community, observing classes, attending assemblies, performances, art openings, and art events throughout the year as appropriate; support and engage richly in arts productions, shows, exhibitions, and performances; participate in parent events to gain insight into the Walnut Hill parent experience and philanthropic interest;
- Actively participate in the student community by supporting the Student Life program which may include chaperoning School events, providing weekend duty, or other opportunities for community involvement that arise throughout the School year; this work informs understanding and builds visibility/credibility;
- Speak authentically about the imperative for community and belonging in schools; be committed to learning about and contributing to Walnut Hill's culture of belonging;
- Attend Walnut Hill community events such as Family Weekend, Open House, Class Night, Boar's Head, Candlelight, Awards Ceremony, and Graduation; plan and/or attend other events as required;
- Work collaboratively with colleagues across all departments to foster a positive working and educational environment for students and employees to support the School's mission, vision, and core values;
- Attend and participate in all faculty and staff meetings, professional development trainings and department meetings; participate and engage fully in individual reviews and evaluations; be open to feedback and work with the Head of School to set goals and expectations for the future; and
- Display willingness and ability to grow, learn, explore new approaches, and practice self-reflection.

Qualifications and Desired Attributes

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent required; advanced degree in related field preferred;
- 8+ years' progressive experience in development; at least 5 years managing a comprehensive program and team, including Annual Fund, major gifts, planned giving, corporate and foundation relations, and capital campaigns;
- Experience working in or knowledge of education and/or the arts;
- Established track record of elevating the success of an organization through fundraising and constituent engagement, and specifically through cultivating, soliciting, and closing principal gifts (6-7+ figures);
- Proven relationship manager with strong interest in developing strategic and long-lasting relationships with Walnut Hill constituents;
- Sophisticated understanding of the donor journey and the ability to segment and provide inspiring experiences for them along each stage of the philanthropic "funnel"
- Substantial experience with time management; ability to balance travel and time on the road with oversight of the team;
- Strong supervisory skills and ability to provide leadership, vision, mentorship, and direction to a team of direct reports;
- Inspirational and charismatic communicator who can serve with the Head of School as a "chief evangelist" for Walnut Hill;
- A compelling speaker and writer who can articulate key fundraising and stewardship messages throughout the year over multiple channels: proposals, appeal letters, newsletters, annual reports, etc.;
- Possess excellent engagement skills and ability to work with a wide range of internal and external constituents – alumni, students, families, faculty/staff, donors, board members, outside artists, vendors, and community members;
- Proficient at data collection and analysis and the ability to use data to hone strategy; solid understanding of development database technology;
- High integrity and the ability to handle highly sensitive information with discretion;
- Impeccable organizational and project management skills with the ability to successfully manage near and long-term projects;
- Innovative mindset that seeks best practices and stays abreast of trends and advancements in development, both in the educational space and other industries;
- Commitment to learning about and contributing to Walnut Hill's culture of belonging;
- Strong understanding of cultural competency and demonstrated commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive community; and
- Fluency in Korean or Mandarin Chinese a plus.

Benefits Statement

Walnut Hill School for the Arts offers a competitive benefit package including medical, dental, vision, life/disability insurance, up to 7% matching retirement contribution through TIAA, generous time off, meals in the dining hall, fitness center access, tickets to performances, and professional development opportunities. Residential Life Opportunity: As a boarding school, opportunities to live on campus and work as a dorm parent or other position in the Residential Life program may be available. Candidates may express interest in applying for a Residential Life position at any point during the application process.

Learn More

Click on the links below to learn more about Walnut Hill School for the Arts.

[School Website](#)

[Virtual Tour](#)

[Core Values](#)

[College Matriculation](#)

[Community & Belonging](#)

[About Natick, MA](#)



To Apply

Submit a resume and cover letter through the [Walnut Hill School for the Arts online Career Center](#).

Note: All offers of employment are contingent upon the successful completion of state and federal background checks. Walnut Hill does not provide visa sponsorship.