CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

Job Description

REPORTS TO: Head of School **STATUS:** Exempt, Full Time

SCHEDULE: 12 Months, Full time, 40 hours per week. Normal business hours are M-F, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Additional hours outside of these times will be required for events and some travel. This is an on-campus role.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Chief Advancement Officer (CAO) is an institutional leader responsible for providing strategic leadership for Salisbury School's philanthropic program, with particular focus on leadership, major and principal gifts, planned giving, campaign strategy, and donor stewardship

Reporting directly to the Head of School, the CAO leads Salisbury's frontline fundraising efforts and works in constant and close collaboration with the Director of Advancement to ensure a unified, coordinated, and highly effective Advancement program. Together, the CAO and Director of Advancement will foster a culture of collaboration, shared accountability, and constituent-centered engagement across the Advancement team.

The CAO directly supervises Salisbury's Director of Planned and Leadership Giving, Leadership Gift Officer, and the Director of Stewardship and Donor Engagement, establishing clear goals, providing strategic guidance, and creating a culture of high performance, collaboration, accountability, and professional growth.

The CAO will be a visible and compelling ambassador for the School and will bring a deep understanding of philanthropy, sophisticated relationship management, sound judgment, and a genuine commitment to Salisbury's mission and community.

PRIMARY ROLE & RESPONSIBLITIES

Strategy, Campaigns, and Fundraising

- Set short- and long-term fundraising priorities, goals, and performance expectations aligned with Salisbury's mission, strategic priorities, and financial objectives, in close partnership with the Head of School and Director of Advancement.
- Lead strategy for leadership, major, principal, comprehensive, and capital campaign fundraising; translate institutional priorities into compelling philanthropic opportunities.
- Build and manage a strong prospect pipeline, ensuring disciplined portfolio management and movement through identification, qualification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship.
- Personally manage a select portfolio of top donors and prospects; develop and execute strategies for significant outright, endowed, capital, planned, blended, and campaign gifts.
- Set and monitor goals for visits, solicitations, proposals, gift commitments, revenue, and pipeline development; review forecasts and results and adjust strategy as needed.
- Plan significant campaign solicitations, including gift levels, timing, priorities, volunteer roles, and solicitation teams. Prepare the Head of School, trustees, and campaign volunteers for high-level donor conversations.
- Ensure campaign success builds a lasting culture of philanthropy and supports Salisbury's long-term strength beyond any single campaign.

Planned Giving, Stewardship, and Donor Engagement

- Provide strategic oversight of planned and blended giving, integrating these opportunities into major-gift and broader fundraising strategies and participating in complex donor discussions when appropriate.
- Guide a personalized stewardship program that communicates impact, deepens donor relationships, and reflects responsiveness, gratitude, integrity, and meaningful engagement.
- Partner with Head of School and other School leaders to cultivate and steward Salisbury's most significant donors.

Team Leadership and Institutional Partnership

- Recruit, lead, mentor, and evaluate frontline fundraisers and stewardship leadership; coach staff on strategy, cultivation, solicitation, negotiation, and relationship management.
- Establish clear team and individual goals, conduct regular portfolio reviews, support professional development, and hold staff accountable for results and donor experience.
- Work continuously with the Director of Advancement to align fundraising and constituent engagement across the department, with frequent communication, shared planning, and mutual accountability.
- Serve as a principal advisor to the Head of School on philanthropy and donor strategy; strategically deploy senior leaders and engage trustees as ambassadors, connectors, donors, and fundraising partners.
- Collaborate with faculty, coaches, administrators, and other School leaders to identify opportunities for donor engagement and ensure Advancement is a trusted institutional partner.
- Maintain accurate donor records and meaningful reporting on fundraising activity, pipeline strength, forecasts, campaign progress, and results.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree required or equivalent professional experience, with 10 years of progressively responsible advancement experience, including leadership in major and principal gifts and a proven record of personally securing significant, transformational gifts.
- Experience managing and developing frontline fundraisers and leading comprehensive or capital campaigns, including strategy, volunteer engagement, and solicitation.
- Strong understanding of planned and blended giving and experience working with a Head of School, CFO, trustees, and senior leaders.
- Independent school, higher education, or similarly relationship-driven nonprofit experience strongly preferred.
- Excellent relationship-building, communication, strategic, analytical, organizational, and management skills; sound judgment, discretion, integrity, and emotional intelligence.
- Experience with Raiser's Edge NXT or a comparable advancement database; ability to use data to guide strategy and performance.
- Willingness and ability to travel extensively and participate regularly in evening and weekend School and Advancement activities.

Leadership Attributes and Measures of Success

The successful CAO is a sophisticated fundraiser, strategic and institutionally minded leader, trusted relationship builder, effective manager and coach, and highly collaborative partner. The CAO is donor-centered, results-oriented, authentic, discreet, and low-ego—able to lead directly when needed and to enable the Head of School, trustees, volunteers, and colleagues to lead when most effective.

Success will be reflected in growth in annual and campaign fundraising; increased leadership, major, principal, planned, and blended gifts; a strong and advancing prospect pipeline; successful campaign strategy and solicitations; effective stewardship and senior-leader engagement; accurate forecasting and accountability; professional growth among frontline fundraisers; a unified Advancement culture, particularly a strong partnership between the CAO and Director of Advancement; and a strengthened culture of philanthropy that positions Salisbury for sustained fundraising success well beyond the current campaign.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS/ ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Must be able to communicate effectively to perform your job successfully.
- Must be proficient in composition of written communication.
- Must have excellent computer skills including Microsoft office.
- Must have the ability to handle multiple projects simultaneously.
- Must have superior follow through and ability to meet deadlines and goals.
- Must have the ability to work independently in a self-directed manner and in collaboration with others.
- Must have excellent organizational and planning skills, creativity, and attention to detail & accuracy.
- Must possess the ability to make independent decisions when circumstances warrant such action.
- Must have the ability to work collaboratively as part of a team.
- Must be able to follow written and oral instructions.
- Must maintain a high degree of professionalism.
- Must demonstrate ability to use good judgment and to handle confidential information with a high level of sensitivity ensuring the privacy of donors and prospects.
- Must be able to travel.
- Must have patience, tact, and enthusiasm when dealing with alumni, personnel, students, & families.

PHYSICAL & SENSORY REQUIREMENTS (with or without the aid of a mechanical device)

- Must function independently and be able to move intermittently throughout the workday.
- Must be able to cope with the mental and emotional stress of the position.
- Must possess sight/hearing senses or use prosthetics that will enable these senses to function adequately so that the requirements of this position can be fully met.
- Must be able to work in person, on campus.
- Must be flexible and willing to adapt to new technology and/or schedules.
- Must function independently.
- Must be able to travel.
- Must be able to lift, push, pull, and move equipment, supplies, etc., without restrictions.

The salary range for this position is $235,000 - $255,000. Placement in the salary range is based on relevant experience, education, skills and other factors permitted by law.

Candidates interested in this position should submit a letter of interest and resume to Tina Bunce at tbunce@salisburyschool.org.