

Greater Atlanta Christian School

Chief Financial and Operating Officer

carterbaldwin
search done better™



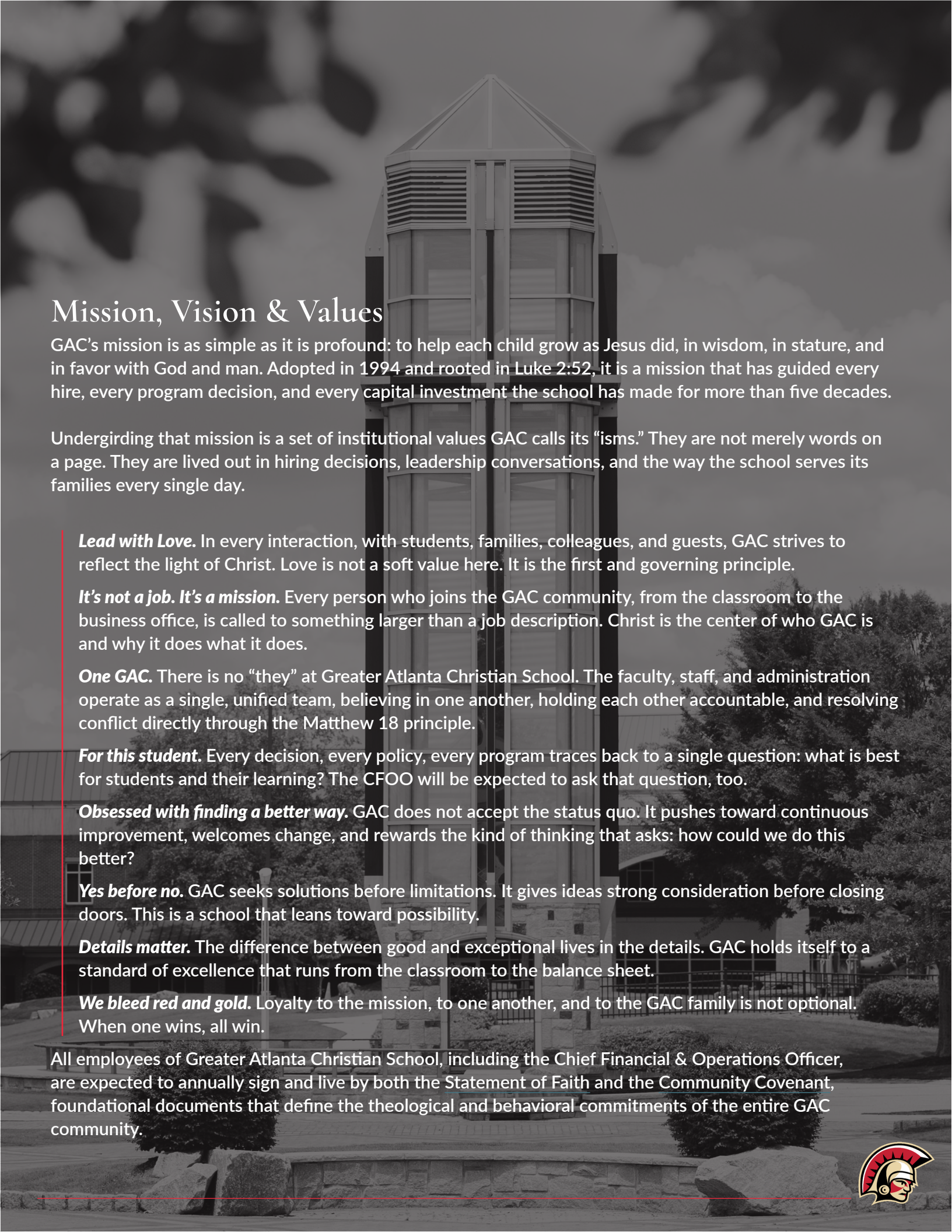
About Greater Atlanta Christian School

Greater Atlanta Christian School (GAC) is an independent, Christ-centered, college-preparatory day school serving students from infants through 12th grade on a more than 100-acre campus in Norcross, Georgia. Founded in 1968 with 150 students in what was then rural Gwinnett County, GAC has grown into one of the largest and most distinctive Christian independent schools in the United States, now enrolling approximately 1,700 students and families drawn from 85 zip codes across 13 counties.

GAC operates at a scale that rivals small colleges. With an annual operating budget of more than $60 million, a faculty of 137 educators, and a total workforce of approximately 500 full-time and part-time employees, the school serves students on a single, unified campus across five distinct divisions: Young Learners (ages 6 weeks through 2 years), Early Childhood Village (K3 and K4), Elementary School (K5 through 5th grade), Middle School (grades 6 through 8), and High School (grades 9 through 12). Its financial strength, well-managed and growing endowment, and sophisticated campus infrastructure reflect an institution that has grown well beyond the boundaries of a typical independent Christian school.

The campus reflects decades of intentional investment, with academic, athletic, fine arts, and experiential learning facilities that rival those of small universities. From multiple gymnasiums, synthetic turf fields, Spartan Stadium, and the Freeman Aquatic Center to the Williams Fine Arts Building, the Performing Arts Center, and the beloved Wood Family Treehouse and Canopy Walk, the physical environment at GAC is as intentional as everything else about the school.

What families discover when they arrive on campus, and what keeps them here, goes beyond facilities and academic rankings. GAC is a school where faith is lived, not merely stated. Where students from across the greater Atlanta region find genuine community rooted in something that can't be manufactured. Where roughly 25 students were baptized last year and hundreds more took meaningful steps in their faith. And where the founding conviction remains as alive today as it was in 1968: that this is God's school, called to help each child grow in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man.



Mission, Vision & Values

GAC's mission is as simple as it is profound: to help each child grow as Jesus did, in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man. Adopted in 1994 and rooted in Luke 2:52, it is a mission that has guided every hire, every program decision, and every capital investment the school has made for more than five decades.

Undergirding that mission is a set of institutional values GAC calls its "isms." They are not merely words on a page. They are lived out in hiring decisions, leadership conversations, and the way the school serves its families every single day.

Lead with Love. In every interaction, with students, families, colleagues, and guests, GAC strives to reflect the light of Christ. Love is not a soft value here. It is the first and governing principle.

It's not a job. It's a mission. Every person who joins the GAC community, from the classroom to the business office, is called to something larger than a job description. Christ is the center of who GAC is and why it does what it does.

One GAC. There is no "they" at Greater Atlanta Christian School. The faculty, staff, and administration operate as a single, unified team, believing in one another, holding each other accountable, and resolving conflict directly through the Matthew 18 principle.

For this student. Every decision, every policy, every program traces back to a single question: what is best for students and their learning? The CFOO will be expected to ask that question, too.

Obsessed with finding a better way. GAC does not accept the status quo. It pushes toward continuous improvement, welcomes change, and rewards the kind of thinking that asks: how could we do this better?

Yes before no. GAC seeks solutions before limitations. It gives ideas strong consideration before closing doors. This is a school that leans toward possibility.

Details matter. The difference between good and exceptional lives in the details. GAC holds itself to a standard of excellence that runs from the classroom to the balance sheet.

We bleed red and gold. Loyalty to the mission, to one another, and to the GAC family is not optional. When one wins, all win.

All employees of Greater Atlanta Christian School, including the Chief Financial & Operations Officer, are expected to annually sign and live by both the Statement of Faith and the Community Covenant, foundational documents that define the theological and behavioral commitments of the entire GAC community.

The GAC Experience

Greater Atlanta Christian School delivers an educational experience that is deliberately and distinctively whole. Across every division, students are challenged academically, developed spiritually, and given room to discover and pursue their gifts in the arts, athletics, and beyond.

Academically, GAC offers a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum that includes 30 Advanced Placement courses, 19 Dual Credit courses, 32 Honors courses, and more than 60 STEM courses across the middle and high schools. In 2025, GAC students completed 563 AP exams, with 93% earning scores of 3 or higher and 118 students receiving AP Scholar recognition. Approximately 76% of faculty hold advanced degrees, and their investment in students is central to the culture of the school.

GAC's commitment to innovation extends beyond its physical campus through Ethos School, its Christian Global Online School, which currently serves more than 600 students on GAC's campus as well as from across the globe with the same faith-infused, college-preparatory curriculum that defines the GAC experience. Ethos equips students with the online learning skills and academic flexibility increasingly demanded by colleges and the global workforce.

The arts are a visible and deeply valued part of student life, with more than 40 performing and visual arts electives and more than 1,000 students participating annually in programming that spans band, orchestra, drama, dance, choir, film, and visual arts. Athletics are equally central, with 65 competitive teams across 15 sports, 69 state championships, and more than 100 student-athletes signing to compete collegiately over the past five years.

Christian formation is woven into every dimension of daily life at GAC. Every student takes a dedicated Bible class from K3 through 12th grade, and chapels are held by school level multiple times each week. Beyond the required experience, hundreds of students voluntarily participate in discipleship groups, Bible studies, chapel leadership, and mission experiences locally, nationally, and internationally, reflecting a school where spiritual formation is not a program but a way of life.



Auxiliary Programs

Greater Atlanta Christian School operates one of the most robust auxiliary program portfolios in independent Christian education, a direct reflection of the school's commitment to being a school for the whole family. These programs extend the GAC mission well beyond the traditional school day, serving students, families, and the broader community while generating meaningful revenue that supports the school's financial health and long-term sustainability.

Current programs include the Spartan Store, offering uniforms, spirit wear, gifts, and food and beverage; GAC Transportation, providing route service across the greater Atlanta region; Encore after-school care and the Discovery Enrichment Program for Lower School students; the School of Music and School of Ballet, offering private and group instruction from Early Childhood through 12th grade; Spartan Aquatics Club, providing competitive swim programming and lessons; the Tennis Academy, offering private and group instruction, high performance college prep, and court rentals; GAC Summer Camp, a seven-week program serving rising Pre-K through 6th grade students; Ethos School, an online Christian school serving GAC students as well as more than 600 students worldwide across more than 75 partner schools; and the Ignite Center, a co-working space across the street from campus that gives parents a professional workspace steps away from where their children learn.

60+
STEM courses in middle and high school



40+
Performing and visual art electives



20+
Trips for experiential learning outside the classroom



The Light The Way Campaign

The Light the Way capital campaign represents the most significant investment in GAC's physical campus in the school's history. Now tracking toward $38 million, the campaign has funded a transformation of the school's facilities that will serve students and families for generations.

Major additions and renovations completed through the campaign include the Jim & Julie Tidwell Commons, a transformational facility featuring student innovation spaces, a media production studio, a student-run coffee shop, updated library resources, and the Center for Christian Life & Missions; the Jim & Becky Combee Elementary Complex, with flexible classrooms, outdoor learning environments, and an Engineering, Science & Design Lab; and the Naik Athletic Training Center, which includes all new equipment in the Darius Slayton Performance Training Center. Construction continues, with a new Field House and an outdoor 50-meter competition pool scheduled for completion by May 2027.



The Opportunity

Under the leadership of Dr. Scott Harsh, President of Greater Atlanta Christian School, the school stands at one of the most compelling moments in its history. Enrollment is strong and approaching capacity, the Light the Way campaign has transformed the physical campus, the finance team is stable and tenured, and the board is engaged, high-trust, and aligned around a shared vision. The endowment is well-managed and growing, the institution is financially sound, and the strategic agenda ahead is as ambitious as anything GAC has undertaken. With that foundation firmly in place, the school is turning its attention to what comes next.

The Chief Financial and Operating Officer (CFOO) will be a key partner in that next chapter. Reporting to the President and working closely with the Board of Trustees and its Finance Committee, the CFOO will strengthen GAC's financial core while helping shape the school's long-term strategic direction and institutional durability. This leader will help resource and sustain GAC's most significant strategic priorities, including the optimization of a $4.55 million auxiliary program portfolio with meaningful revenue upside and the stewardship and successful completion of the Light the Way campaign through 2028. The CFOO will also play an important role in evaluating and supporting future growth opportunities, strategic initiatives, and innovative models designed to extend GAC's mission and impact, providing the financial vision, planning, and strategic architecture the school's continued growth requires.

This role extends well beyond finance. The incoming CFOO will carry responsibility for Human Resources, Information Technology, and Campus Operations, giving this leader a portfolio that reflects the full operational complexity of an institution that functions more like a small university than a traditional independent school. GAC has led the independent school market in the use of technology in the classroom and beyond, has a culture of innovation, and expects its senior leaders to engage across every dimension of institutional life.

Working in close partnership with Dr. Harsh, the CFOO will help model what financially sustainable, mission-aligned growth looks like for GAC. The school regularly hosts peer institutions on its campus, participates actively in national Christian education networks, and sees itself as a leader in shaping what excellent Christian education can look like. The CFOO will be part of that conversation.

The next CFOO will join a community where the "Isms" are lived, the mission is protected, and the culture is worth preserving. He or she will bring transparent communication, sound financial judgment, and a genuine commitment to the people they lead and the mission they serve. The opportunity is to help steward one of the most dynamic and mission-driven seasons in GAC's history, and to ensure that what has been built here continues to grow, strengthen, and expand its impact for generations to come.

The Role

The Chief Financial & Operating Officer serves as a senior member of the President's leadership cabinet, a highly visible and deeply collaborative role that carries significant institutional weight. The CFOO will work in close partnership with Dr. Harsh, the Board of Trustees, the Budget and Finance Committee, and the GAC Foundation Board to ensure that GAC's financial health, operational strength, and strategic ambitions are fully aligned.

The CFOO oversees a talented and tenured finance team led by the Director of Finance and supported by a controller, senior accountants, student accounts, accounts payable, financial aid, and systems administration. Beyond the finance function, the CFOO carries direct responsibility for Human Resources, Information Technology, and Campus Operations and Services, making this one of the broadest executive portfolios in the school.

The CFOO serves as GAC's primary financial strategist and chief operational partner to the President. He or she will cultivate a strong, trust-based relationship with the Board of Trustees and Finance Committee, communicating financial performance, strategic opportunities, and institutional risks with clarity and confidence.

This leader will be the primary financial partner to GAC's Vice President of Advancement, working hand in hand to align campaign strategy, endowment growth, donor stewardship, and long-term financial planning. Working closely with the President and GAC Foundation Board, the CFOO will provide financial insight, modeling, and strategic support related to endowment management, investment oversight, annual distributions, and other initiatives that strengthen the school's long-term financial health and mission sustainability.

This is a role for a leader who is energized by complexity, grounded in faith, and genuinely excited about what a financially strong and mission-driven school can accomplish.



Key Responsibilities

Financial Leadership & Strategy

- Oversee all financial operations of the school, including budgeting, forecasting, financial planning, and reporting
- Lead the annual audit process and maintain a clean, well-governed financial environment
- Prepare and present monthly and annual financial reports to senior leadership and the Board of Trustees
- Develop and maintain multi-year financial models and scenario-based planning tools that support institutional decision-making
- Provide financial insight and strategic partnership to the President, senior leadership, and admissions leadership related to net tuition revenue strategy, financial aid modeling, and enrollment economics
- Manage debt obligations, bond covenants, and banking relationships
- Identify and evaluate new revenue opportunities, including auxiliary program optimization and mission-aligned revenue diversification
- Oversee the school's risk management, insurance, and compliance functions

Advancement & Endowment Partnership

- Serve as the primary financial partner to the Vice President of Advancement, aligning campaign strategy, gift accounting, pledge management, and donor stewardship with the school's long-term financial plan
- Serve as a strategic financial resource to the President and GAC Foundation Board, contributing insight and analysis related to endowment governance, investment oversight, and annual distribution decisions
- Support the financial modeling and planning for GAC's next major capital campaign
- Develop and strengthen a long-term endowment growth strategy in collaboration with advancement and foundation leadership

Operations, HR & IT

- Provide executive oversight of Human Resources, ensuring competitive compensation modeling, benefits administration, staff development, and regulatory compliance
- Oversee Information Technology, ensuring GAC's technology infrastructure, data security, and innovation initiatives are well-resourced and strategically aligned
- Oversee Campus Operations and Services, providing strategic leadership for a mature and highly developed physical plant exceeding 100 acres and encompassing academic, athletic, arts, aquatic, and experiential learning facilities. Ensure long-range facilities planning, capital renewal, campus security, operational excellence, and stewardship of one of the most significant Christian school campuses in the nation.
- Evaluate and strengthen systems, processes, and staffing across all areas of operational responsibility



Auxiliary Programs

Provide strategic and financial oversight of GAC's auxiliary program portfolio, including the Spartan Store, Transportation, School of Music, School of Ballet, Spartan Aquatics Club, Tennis Academy, After School Care, Discovery Enrichment Program, Summer Camp, and the Ignite Center

Evaluate the financial performance and strategic value of each program

Strengthen and reimagine existing auxiliary programs to ensure they remain financially sustainable, mission-aligned, and responsive to emerging opportunities and market demands

Develop and evaluate new auxiliary ventures, educational services, strategic partnerships, and mission-aligned business opportunities that expand GAC's impact, strengthen community engagement, and diversify institutional revenue streams

Strategic Growth & Institutional Development

Partner closely with the President to identify, evaluate, and advance strategic initiatives that strengthen institutional sustainability, mission impact, and long-term growth

Develop innovative revenue models, business ventures, and partnerships that diversify income beyond tuition and traditional fundraising

Collaborate with admissions and senior leadership to evaluate enrollment growth, market expansion, transportation initiatives, and emerging educational delivery models

Contribute to the long-term development of GAC's presence in the surrounding community through strategic property acquisition, real estate opportunities, community partnerships, and initiatives that strengthen the school's regional position

Lead financial and operational analysis related to major strategic investments, new programs, facilities expansion, and other mission-advancing opportunities

Monitor demographic, economic, technological, and educational trends and recommend strategies that position GAC for long-term success in a rapidly changing environment

Board & Governance

Serve as the primary staff liaison to the Budget and Finance Committee and the GAC Foundation Board

Prepare and present financial reports, analyses, and strategic recommendations to the Board of Trustees

Ensure compliance with all regulatory, audit, and governance requirements

Support the Building and Grounds Committee with financial analysis and capital planning

People Leadership

Lead, develop, and invest in a talented and tenured finance team

Foster a culture of excellence, collaboration, and professional growth across all areas of direct responsibility

Model the faith, character, and leadership standards that define the GAC community

Key Qualifications

Authentic, mature Christian faith lived out personally and professionally

Genuine alignment with GAC's Statement of Faith and Community Covenant

A calling to Christian education and a deep understanding of what it means to serve in a mission-driven institution where every decision traces back to the flourishing of students and families

Progressive financial leadership experience with meaningful responsibility at the senior or executive level

Background in independent school or higher education finance, where the candidate has developed a deep understanding of tuition-driven revenue models, fund accounting, endowment management, and financial aid strategy; candidates from the corporate sector bring the strongest fit when they have meaningful board service or direct employment experience in a faith-based or mission-driven nonprofit organization

Has carried executive responsibility beyond finance, with direct oversight of Human Resources, Information Technology, or Operations

Strong financial modeling, forecasting, and scenario-based planning capabilities, including the ability to support institutional growth initiatives, manage debt obligations and banking relationships, oversee gift accounting and pledge management, and contribute to long-term financial planning

Demonstrated ability to translate complex financial data into clear, actionable insights for senior leadership and board audiences

Strong working knowledge of audit processes, internal controls, and financial reporting standards for nonprofit organizations

A developer of people who builds strong, capable teams and invests in the growth of those around them

A clear and confident communicator who presents with conviction and receives feedback openly

Bachelor's degree in finance, accounting, business administration, or a related field required; graduate degree strongly preferred





Characteristics of the Ideal Candidate

The next Chief Financial & Operating Officer of Greater Atlanta Christian School will:

- Lead with authentic, lived faith and model the character and values of the GAC community in every interaction
- Bring entrepreneurial energy and strategic imagination to the role while maintaining the financial discipline and operational rigor the institution requires
- Be a humble, relational leader who understands that influence at GAC flows through people and invests accordingly
- Develop people intentionally, building a culture of excellence, clarity, and professional growth across the finance team and all areas of responsibility
- Come in curious, taking time to understand how and why things work before proposing changes
- Communicate with transparency and confidence, sharing context generously with the President, the cabinet, and the board
- Think creatively about revenue, growth, and institutional development while always keeping mission at the center
- Be energized rather than intimidated by the complexity and scale of an institution like GAC
- Partner naturally with the President, serving as a trusted right-hand leader who carries significant operational and strategic weight on behalf of the institution
- Demonstrate the emotional intelligence and relational warmth that GAC's culture demands, both inside the cabinet and across the broader school community
- Embrace the full scope of the role, from the balance sheet to the bus system, with equal seriousness and enthusiasm



Contact

carterbaldwin
search done better™

Chris Hornsby
Partner
(678) 448-0003
chornsby@carterbaldwin.com

Ted Wieber
Consultant
(678) 448-0006
twieber@carterbaldwin.com

Melissa Murray
Research
mmurray@carterbaldwin.com

Jodi Delikat
Search Coordinator
jdelikat@carterbaldwin.com