WOODSIDE PRIORY SCHOOL
PORTOLA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA
HEAD OF SCHOOL
START DATE: JULY 1, 2020
WWW.PRIORYCA.ORG
**Priory Mission**

Woodside Priory School is a Catholic Benedictine, independent college preparatory school. Our mission is to assist all students in creating meaningful and balanced lives, developing as lifelong learners and stewards, and productively serving a world in need of their gifts.

**OVERVIEW**

Woodside Priory School, commonly known as Priory, is an independent, coeducational, Catholic Benedictine, college preparatory, day and boarding school enrolling 375 students in grades 6-12. Priory seeks a Head of School effective July 2020. This is one of the finest Catholic school leadership opportunities currently available, and we are delighted to welcome inquiries from high performing leaders with passion for mission who meet the requirements listed later in this document.

With its roots in the 1,500-year-old tradition of Catholic Benedictine education, Priory provides an outstanding college preparatory education while welcoming young people into a community where they feel uniquely known and loved. Priory students feel free to take intellectual and creative risks, to discover their passions, and to grow in heart, mind, and soul. An outstanding faculty, rigorous college-preparatory curriculum, upbeat campus atmosphere, and broad co-curricular program all make up the “Priory Way” and set the stage for a balanced educational adventure.

Current Head of School Tim Molak is set to retire in June 2020. He will have served the Priory community for 30 years, first as Dean of Students and for the past 22 years as Head of School. His long tenure is testament to the culture and tone of the school and has provided the stability and leadership needed to position the school for further growth and prominence. The next Head of School will have an opportunity to build on this solid institutional platform and powerful Benedictine ethos. This is a classic “take it to the next level” leadership opportunity.
**SCHOOL HISTORY**

The school was founded in 1957 by a group of seven Hungarian Benedictine monks from Saint Martin’s Archabibey in Pannonhalma, Hungary. Since 1974, the monks have been affiliated with Saint Anselm Abbey in Goffstown, New Hampshire. The school began as an 18-acre ranch and has expanded significantly with the campus now encompassing 51 acres. Priory began as an all male-boarding school. Today boarding students make up 20% of the student body. In the early 1990’s, Priory welcomed girls into the day program and celebrated the class of 1995 as the first co-ed class to graduate. In 2004, a girls’ dorm was established and today the population of boarders is half boys and half girls.

**THE SCHOOL**

Five Benedictine values structure every aspect of the school and are the keystones to a Priory experience: Spirituality, Hospitality, Individuality, Integrity, and Community. All students have passions and talents that need to be discovered and nurtured. The Benedictine philosophy of learning in a community where students and adults work and play together is real at Priory. Faculty, staff, and students dine together at lunch and attend celebrations together. Teachers are available to students in and outside of the classroom and consistently encourage students to reach for their highest potential in their own individual ways. The strong relationships between teachers and students are the foundation of a positive learning environment where all are welcome.

Educators at Priory continually reflect on their practices, seek out cutting-edge educational thinking, and embrace better ways to meet students’ needs. Teachers are experts in their fields of study, most
with advanced degrees, who love their subject matter and care deeply about students. Classes are intentionally small—an average of 13—allowing students and teachers to engage deeply in intellectual discourse, critical thinking, and problem solving.

Following its Benedictine history and tradition, the school believes strongly in social justice and progressive change for the advancement of the world. As such, it is deeply committed to equity and inclusion in the community. Nearly half the student population are students of color who come from various socioeconomic, ethnic, and regional backgrounds. An important commitment to diversity and inclusion is Priory’s Financial Aid and Access programs, which focus on supporting students from all types of backgrounds. Priory is determined to have a student body that reflects the global community it serves, and provides resources and support for all students to be successful at Priory. These programs support diversity for the benefit of underrepresented groups, and also for the benefit that all students get to understand and learn from all backgrounds. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (faculty and staff) works with many student groups, as well as the school administration, to ensure that all voices are heard and all backgrounds and groups are supported.

The School is accredited by the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), and the Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA).

**Governance**

Woodside Priory School, a California non-profit corporation and organization described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, was incorporated in 1957, and includes two
Boards—a Board of Directors consisting of five Benedictine Monks (the Abbot and four other Monks appointed and elected from Saint Anselm and Priory communities), and a Board of Trustees which is primarily comprised of lay people. The Board of Trustees has shared governance of the school in service to the Monastic communities and Board of Directors. Since 1996, when this two-tiered governance structure was established, there has been strong collaboration and dialogue between the two boards. This is a highly effective governing structure, and both Boards meet together each January for three days to work together and to approve salary and tuition increases.

**ACADEMICS**

Academic rigor is part of life at Priory. The educational philosophy centers on inspiring a lifelong love of learning and desire for academic excellence, encouraging responsible citizenship, promoting an understanding of diversity and respect, and motivating students to explore their intellectual potential.

Faculty understand that learners have different needs at different times and are there for all students throughout their academic journey at Priory. Students graduate fully prepared and confident in their abilities to transition to college life. Even more important, they leave full of excitement, self-knowledge, and a passion to continue learning.

**Middle School**

The Middle School student body is approximately 100 students with a balance of boys and girls. With a student-teacher ratio of about 7:1, teachers get to know each student well. Sensitive to the unique needs of students at this age, the heart of the Middle School experience is balance. Students are challenged with the academic rigor needed to prepare them for high school and provided with a nurturing
learning environment along the way. Learning is dynamic, engaging, highly collaborative, and “hands on.” Teachers engage in innovative lesson planning that includes putting students in the center of their own learning.

The Middle School offers rich academic courses with a broad array of dynamic electives. Each grade level has one Humanities teacher, who teaches both English and social studies. Core courses also include math, physical education, science, theology, and world languages (French, Mandarin, or Spanish). A wide range of electives is offered for all grade levels. Sixth graders take a quarter of art, computer science, drama, and music. Seventh and eighth graders select several choice electives each year to explore their interests and talents. Options include woodworking, ceramics, digital photography, worlds of music, dance, LEGO® robotics, and more. Project Step Up is the capstone for eighth grade students where they research, create, and present a product connected to a local humanitarian issue.

**Upper School**

Priory Upper School is about more than college preparation. It’s also about developing habits of mind, broadening one’s exposure, and discerning life-long personal passions. The program is specifically designed to allow for exploration and experimentation along with rigorous college preparation.

Graduation requirements include coursework in English, world language (French, Mandarin, Spanish, or Japanese), math, science, computer science, history and social sciences, theology, visual arts, performing arts, physical education, health, and community service. For their Senior Project, spring semester seniors are challenged to identify a need that aligns with a personal passion and present a real-world solution.
Many forms of support for students and families are available, including a four-year Advisory program, a caring guidance counseling department, the Academic Resource Center, and a hands-on four-year college-counseling program that begins in freshman year and continues through college acceptance.

Priory seeks to aid students in becoming global citizens, and Priory Global Education Program promotes real world engagement through strategic partnerships and global immersion experiences. These opportunities are designed to inspire and empower Priory students to make a difference in the world. Four Upper School experiences are available for the current school year: Cambodia, China, Guatemala, and Costa Rica.

## Arts and Athletics

Priory greatly values arts in education and combines learning about and practicing the arts with academic studies. In the required curriculum of the fine and performing arts, all students are encouraged to tap into their creative and expressive capabilities and everyone learns to produce finished pieces of art, often in the context of another discipline such as history or humanities.

### College Acceptances

The following is a selection of colleges and universities to which graduates were accepted from 2014-18:

- Boston University
- Brown University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Colby College
- Dartmouth College
- Elon University
- Fordham University
- George Washington University
- Georgetown University
- Harvard University
- Johns Hopkins University
- King’s College London
- Lafayette College
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- McGill University
- Middlebury College
- New York University
- Northeastern University
- Northwestern University
- Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences
- Pepperdine University
- Pomona College
- Princeton University
- Rhode Island School of Design
- Santa Clara University
- Seattle University
- Stanford University
- Swarthmore College
- Trinity College
- Tufts University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Colorado at Boulder
- University of Miami
- University of Michigan
- University of San Diego
- University of Texas, Austin
- University of Wisconsin, Madison
- Vanderbilt University
- Wellesley College
- Williams College
- Xavier University
- Yale University
Students are offered an exceptionally complete range of visual arts, vocal, orchestral, and theater classes. Highlights in the visual arts include an open, multi-media presentation of students’ AP Art portfolios and an indoor/outdoor gallery-style presentation in the spring. The two-story Performing Arts Center lobby is designed with beautiful display space for student art and visiting art. The performing arts program offers a wide range of training in all aspects including theater, choir, orchestra and dance. At any given moment, at least one-quarter of the student body is enrolled in a performing arts class, preparing to perform or run a production, or participating in an arts related club.

As part of its well-rounded educational experience, Priory offers a competitive interscholastic athletic program that also gives every student the opportunity to participate. The program offers a full range of experiences, with an emphasis on developing a healthy, active lifestyle as well as athletic skills. In team sports, coaches reward sportsmanship, commitment, dedication, and hard work. Middle and Upper School teams are competitive and often are in league playoffs. The best teams and athletes compete at regional and state levels. Top Upper School athletes are occasionally recruited by and play on college teams.

Teams in Middle School include cross country, flag football, lacrosse, basketball, soccer, baseball, swimming, tennis, track, volleyball, and water polo. In Upper School, they include water polo, cross country, volleyball, tennis, football, basketball, soccer, baseball, lacrosse, tennis, swimming, and track and field.
Set foot on Priory campus, and it's palpable that this is a place where students are well-known, challenged, and genuinely happy. The five Benedictine values — Hospitality, Spirituality, Integrity, Community, and Individuality — are interspersed in everything, from classroom experiences to athletic competition to extracurricular activities. Students are encouraged and comfortable in taking risks and exploring their interests and passions.

Priory’s co-curricular program includes class retreats, service learning projects, athletics, theater, music, and a broad range of activities made available during the school day. For Middle School students, most activities are experienced within their curriculum and with their classmates. Several leadership opportunities are available at this age level, including executive Middle School council positions, grade level class officers, and participation on Middle School committees. More than 30 club and activity choices are available to High School students, including Woodworking, Business and Investment Club, Dedicated to Diversity, Literary Magazine, March for Our Lives, Robotics Club, Sustainability Club, and Yearbook.

In keeping with the school’s mission to “assist all students in creating meaningful and balanced lives, developing as lifelong learners and stewards, and productively serving a world in need of their gifts,” Priory puts a strong emphasis on students participating in Community Service. Every high school student is required to participate in at least three Service Opportunities—any activity that benefits others who are in need of assistance—each year.

Campus spiritual life is robust, extending beyond the Theology curriculum in the classroom. Annual retreats allow students to gather with their peers, reflect on values, and consider the direction they
are choosing for themselves. Priory Chapel is the spiritual heart of the campus. The monastic community holds daily prayers and services, and the whole school community gathers in the Chapel once a week for song, prayer, campus news, and to listen to profound speakers. The space is open throughout the school day for students, faculty, and staff to pray and meditate.

About 20% of high school students live on campus. Boarding students become part of a larger community that includes monks, faculty, staff, and families. The hallmark of Priory’s boarding program is its emphasis on student wellbeing. Leveraging research from the exciting new field of positive psychology, Residential Faculty work closely with each boarding student to define, measure, and grow their physical, psychological, academic, and communal wellbeing. Full-time Residential Faculty ensure boarders are fully supported during their time at Priory and get to know students in deep and abiding ways.

**CAMPUS**

Priory’s stunning 51-acre campus is nestled against the Santa Cruz mountains and surrounded by old growth redwood trees. From a state-of-the-art performing arts center to a beautiful community-centered chapel, from classrooms that are filled with natural light to a newly refurbished aquatics center, Priory’s campus provides a warm, welcoming, and supportive setting to live and learn.

Schilling Square is in the central gathering place for the Upper School community. Everyday, students have a 20-25-minute break in the late morning, and Upper School students come to hang out with friends and teachers. Church Square is the heart of the Middle School where students gather to play ping pong, tetherball, or just socialize. Surrounding the square are the Middle School classrooms
and Learning Commons, a shared space for Middle and Upper School where the librarian works with students on research and writing skills.

The Benedictine Classroom Buildings surround Schilling Square and are home to most of the classrooms for the Upper School. The newest building in this area, completed in 2015, is a two-story solar-powered building that houses 10 new classrooms and the faculty lounge.

The Student Center and Academic Resource Center are located in the same building at the center of campus. Upstairs is the Dining Hall where students eat lunch each day and boarding students eat breakfast and dinner as well.

The Science, Technology, Robotics, Engineering, Art, and Math (STREAM) Center is the newest building on campus. Opened in January 2018, this 12,000 square-foot building has classrooms for the visual arts program on the first floor; a computer lab with 3D printers; classrooms for drawing and painting, ceramics, and digital photography; and a state-of-the-art robotics lab. On the second floor are three science labs with stunning views of the Santa Cruz Mountains as well as the Pavilion and Franklin Garden, a 75,000 square foot organic garden, which supports distinctive garden studies and sustainability programs.

Athletics facilities include four tennis courts and the Kalman Baseball Field, Gambetta Memorial Gym, Joe Montero Aquatics Center with outdoor pool, and the Father Christopher Field and Trudelle Family Track.
PORTOLA VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Portola Valley is located 35 miles south of San Francisco on the eastern slope of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Surrounded by wooded hills, this pristine and picturesque town of 4,500 residents is located just west of Stanford University, Woodside borders it to the northwest, and Palo Alto to the southeast.

The town values its environmental and historic heritage, its excellent schools, and its economical government supported by a multitude of volunteers. Since incorporation in 1964, development has been intentionally slow, and the town has kept a rural ambiance reminiscent of days gone by.

The Windy Hill Open Space Preserve is a large part of the town’s southwest side and the north side of the town borders Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve. An extensive trail system, scenic roads, open space, and natural views contribute to one’s feeling of being in the country. Commercial activity is encouraged to the extent that it primarily meets needs of residents of the community. These factors have enabled the town to retain its nostalgic feel.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

This is an exceptional and rare opportunity to lead one of the finest independent Catholic schools in the country in one of the most dynamic and exciting areas in the world. Woodside Priory is a school in excellent health: full and selective enrollment, solid financial standing and very manageable debt, high retention amongst students and employees, and a strong sense of community and commitment to core values. Across constituencies, the School’s sense of community, commitment to academic and educational excellence, and strong relationships between the faculty and students are deeply valued and celebrated. The next Head of School will have a terrific opportunity to continue to strengthen and encourage the development of the School and its community. Current strategic priorities include:

- Honoring Priory’s Catholic Benedictine identity. Although Priory is a Catholic school in the Benedictine tradition, 70% of the student body and almost half of the faculty self-identify as non-Catholic, reflecting the welcoming and inclusive ethos of the school. That said, the next Head of School will need to continue balancing both the Catholic and Benedictine traditions and values while remaining respectful of all religious beliefs on campus.
- Continuing to explore the question of “balance” in the student and faculty experience. How is balance defined in and for Priory community—especially the students? How to manage the tension between being a rigorous, college-preparatory school and the health of students, especially in the high-achieving and fast-paced environs of Silicon Valley? Priory was awarded an EE Ford grant to research and explore this question, and the next Head will have the opportunity to deepen and move this work forward.
- Recruiting and retaining a talented and diverse faculty and staff, especially as it relates to the high cost of living in the Bay Area.
- Deepening the School’s commitment to equity and inclusion in alignment with the core value of “all are welcome.”
- Continuing to improve the School’s physical plant and facilities; at present, the School is focusing on improvements to the kitchen, dining room, and gym, as well as adding to faculty/staff housing.
- The community of Portola Valley is very protective of the town, and the next Head will need to be proactive and effective in building relationships and connections with the School’s neighbors and neighborhood.
**Desired Qualities and Qualifications**

The board sees a timely opportunity to attract a dynamic, entrepreneurial leader with passion for mission who can envision a bold new future for the School, building on the traditions and values so solidly in place. As a Catholic Benedictine school, candidates are also expected to be practicing Catholics capable of exemplifying and promoting the School’s religious values and core tenets of Spirituality, Hospitality, Integrity, Individuality, and Community.

In addition, the next Head of School will ideally possess the following qualities and qualifications:

- Commitment to Catholic Benedictine values;
- Understands and fosters diversity;
- Strong internal and external relationship building skills;
- Visionary with strong strategic mindset;
- Financial and operational management acumen;
- Understanding, leadership, and support of academic excellence;
- Humble, calm, thoughtful, and resilient personality.

**To Apply**

Interested and qualified candidates should submit electronically in one email and as separate documents (preferably PDFs) the following materials:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position;
- A current résumé;
- A one-page statement of educational philosophy and practice;
- A list of five professional references with name, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate’s permission) to:

**Bob Regan**  
Senior Consultant  
Group Practice Leader, Catholic Schools Practice  
bob.regan@carneysandoe.com

**Jennifer Christensen**  
Search Consultant  
jennifer.christensen@carneysandoe.com