



DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

SEARCH PROSPECTUS

AVE MARIA, FLORIDA
JULY 2025



AT A GLANCE



**610 STUDENTS
FOR 2025-2026**



**FACULTY
& STAFF**



**CLASSICAL
CURRICULUM**



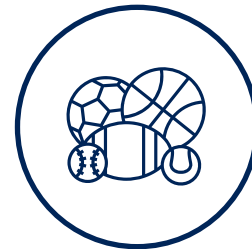
DAILY MASS



**CLASS OF 2024
SCHOLARSHIP
EARNED**



**\$30M SCHOOL
EXPANSION PROJECT**



**81% STUDENT-
ATHLETES**



**80% CATHOLIC COLLEGE
ATTENDANCE**



11 STUDENT CLUBS



**2024 PARENT
VOLUNTEER HOURS**

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Donahue Academy's administrators, faculty, staff, and families come together in steadfast commitment to form young persons in faith, will, and intellect. At the heart of their ethos lies a singular focus on a Catholic and classical educational model augmented by robust community and athletics programming. They live by their motto, *Christum Novisse. Virtutem Contendere*, Encountering Christ and Pursuing Excellence in all things.

The town of Ave Maria, Florida was established in 2005 under the leadership of Roman Catholic philanthropist Tom Monaghan, the founder of Domino's Pizza. Monaghan envisioned the town as a hub for the renewal of Catholic life through dedicated Catholic institutions. In 2007, Ave Maria Grammar and Prep was established as an independent school to serve local Catholic families.

In 2009, philanthropist and AMU Trustee John F. "Jack" Donahue made a generous donation in honor of his wife, Rhodora Jacob Donahue, the matriarch of their family of 13 children. As a result, the school was renamed the Rhodora J. Donahue Academy, commonly known as Donahue Academy.

In 2017, the Diocese of Venice acquired both the oratory—now Ave Maria Catholic Church—and the school. Since then, Donahue Academy has more than doubled its faculty, staff, and student body. This sign of vitality is just one of the ways in which the Lord continues to bless and guide the school and its families.

MISSION

Donahue Academy is a Catholic, classical school where students encounter Christ and pursue excellence in all things. Students will deepen their love of God and others through the pursuit of all that is good, true, and beautiful.

A CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Each morning Donahue Academy starts the day with prayer over the PA system. The whole school celebrates daily Mass and students have the opportunity for daily Confession. The Eucharistic chapel, located at the center of the school is open all day and students enjoy monthly Eucharistic Adoration. Classes recite the noon Angelus and meal prayer daily, and teams pray together before games. Each trivium stage enjoys a bi-annual retreat, and the whole school participates in the annual Our Lady of the Rosary procession. Vocation discernment guidance is offered via the parish and diocese.

Students deepen their knowledge of the Catholic faith at each stage of the trivium through curricula from the Augustine Institute, Ignatius Press, as well as the Bible, the Catechism, papal encyclicals, and classic works by great theologians. Student life brings the liturgical calendar alive with celebrations such as the Stations of the Cross dramatic performance, May Crowning procession, St. Joseph's dinner, and grand Annunciation feast.

Donahue Academy has developed, among others, a special relationship with the Guadalupe Center in Immokalee, FL. Each year brings recurring and new opportunities to serve, whether by running the Thanksgiving food drive, fundraising for new chairs, or serving food at the soup kitchen.



A CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Inspired by a Divine Mission: Catholic schools' educational efforts are part of the Church's mission of salvation and evangelization for the good of each student and the good of society.

Model of Christian Communion: Catholic schools form students for relationship with God and with others in love and in service. All instruction is faithful to Catholic teaching.

Place of Personal Encounter: Catholic schools are places where students encounter Christ in prayer, scripture, and sacrament.

Place of Personal Integration: Catholic schools form the whole student: their spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical dimensions.

Purveyor of a Christian Worldview: Catholic schools seek to impart a Christian view of the world, humanity, life, and history, thereby ordering the whole of human culture to the good news of salvation and the unity of all knowledge.





A CLASSICAL EDUCATION

The classical model of education introduces students to transcendental realities reflecting Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. Though secular classical schools may give a nod in this direction, it is only in the context of considering God as the source and summit of all that is true, good and beautiful, that one can achieve an authentic interpretation and valuing of man and of all reality.

The Tenets of a Classical Education:

- A classical education has as its goal not only the transmission of knowledge, but also the integration and synthesis of complex ideas.
- A classical education focuses on the acquisition of knowledge through reading by using original texts and classics whenever possible.
- A classical education presents various academic disciplines in a sequence corresponding to a pupil's developing ability to think abstractly.
- A classical education probes beyond individual academic disciplines; it seeks essential truths, especially about human dignity, that transcend them all.
- A classical education develops a sense of wonder and a love for learning. Along the way, it forms self-motivated and self-correcting learners.



EXTRACURRICULAR:

Student clubs allow students' shared interests to blossom – whether planting an edible garden, organizing a pro-life march, Model United Nations, participating in robotics and Scholar Bowl competitions, or producing the school's yearbook. The fine arts are also interwoven throughout the curriculum and beyond the classroom, with a heart choir, frequent musical and theatrical productions, and art courses.

ATHLETICS

The athletics program spans grades 3 to 12. Beginning in grades 3 and 4, students can take part in extracurricular sports. Donahue boasts a robust athletic program with baseball, softball, basketball, cross-country, track and field, flag football, football, volleyball and soccer. The Athletic clubs also ensure school spirit and a culture of camaraderie, offering an outlet for concession stand volunteering, student cheer sections, and more. The school has over 55 titles over its history in basketball, cross-country and track, football, and soccer.

COLLEGE ADVISING

Donahue Academy's comprehensive school counseling program addresses core areas of social-emotional well-being, academic success, and college/career planning. The program supports the school mission by integrating lessons of the mind, heart and spirit through developing compassion, love, and understanding of self and others. It aims to build strong habits of mind which promote and enhance the development of all students. Character education is integrated into weekly virtue formation and learning practices of emotional self-regulation, mindfulness, and self-discipline. The program has three primary areas of focus, mental health, college counseling, and training for future counselors.



POSITION OVERVIEW

Rhodora J. Donahue has a beautiful history and legacy of providing excellent Catholic, classical education. Families have relocated from all over the country to attend Donahue and live in this dynamic faith-centered community. The school has had a waiting list of qualified students and recently began a historic expansion project, beginning with a modular classroom wing to expand the student body by 175. The Director of Advancement is responsible for building and leading an advancement team to strengthen the philanthropic support of the school.

The Donahue Fund supports the principles, people, and places that sustain the school's mission of "encountering Christ and pursuing excellence in all things." Supporters of the school, parents, grandparents, alumni, parishioners, and friends generously sustain the vision of Donahue so students can continue to thrive. The Fund provides flexible resources for Catholic, Classical, Community, and Athletic programming that make the Donahue education unique.

This 2024-2025 academic year is the "Annus Praeparationis" – The Year of Preparation – and focuses on expanding the campus with new modular classrooms so that Donahue can admit more than 200 qualified applicants who have been waitlisted. To achieve this objective, the school must undertake plant and equipment upgrades, such as developing additional outdoor covered eating and recreation spaces.



POSITION OVERVIEW

Donahue Academy is the parochial elementary, middle, and high school of Ave Maria Catholic Church, which serves more than 1,400 households through liturgy, evangelization, formation, education, and ministry activities. Donahue Academy provides a faithful Catholic, classical education, including a robust athletics program, to children from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 in an authentically Catholic, tight-knit community environment. The Advancement Director advances the school's mission and vision by crafting and delivering on a multi-year strategic plan to include major gift, capital campaign, endowment, and other initiatives to address the school's needs in the short, medium, and long terms thereby advancing the Kingdom of God in the earthly city.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Advancement reports to the Principal on all matters relating to the school's fundraising and advancement efforts and activity.

- Provide strategic and ambitious advancement vision and know-how to the school's leadership team through the development of a comprehensive, multi-year major giving campaign, multi-phase capital campaign, endowment fund, and planned giving, as well as other long-range funding and other initiatives that achieve the school's short-, medium-, and long-term objectives.
- Assist Principal and Board in recruiting, engaging, and nurturing a diverse Advisory Board of Directors that can supply talent, time, and treasure especially in the areas of strategy, finance, facilities management, and mission advancement to complement the existing Board composition.

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES, CONTINUED

- Liaise with the Director of Stewardship to cultivate beneficial relationships with school's donors.
- Liaise with the Director of Operations to align infrastructure, end-to-end processes (e.g. admissions, advancement), and broader operational activities (e.g. communications, marketing) with the overall advancement strategy.
- Liaise with Business Manager to review, revise, and/or generate budgets and reporting in support of advancement goals.
- Attend advancement events to keep a pulse on active donors' interests, desires, and feedback.
- Work with Principal and the Advisory Board to cultivate donor prospects and strengthen the school's ties to and visibility with persons and institutions in the Ave Maria and greater Naples areas.





ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree plus 6+ years of experience or combination of education and experience; master's degree in business or education is preferred
- Minimum 5 years of experience in fundraising (direct solicitation) in a major giving capacity is required
- Understanding of the giving process and donor behavior, strategic outlook regarding fundraising goals and donor interests, and cross-functional collaboration experience is required
- Demonstrated ability to manage sensitive and confidential information and competing priorities is required
- Expert knowledge of board and trustee recruiting, engagement, and management is required
- Proven track record of success in an education setting is preferred
- Familiarity with the classical model of education is desired
- Must be a practicing Catholic
- Must abide policies and procedures as set forth in the Diocese and Donahue Academy Employee and Family handbooks
- Willingness to undergo background check
- Must be able to work remotely and independently
- Must demonstrate flexibility, creativity, and empathy
- Must demonstrate strong business and financial acumen and exemplary relationship management, negotiation, and communication skills



OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

-The school's commitment to forming saints and providing an authentic Catholic education is a compelling mission that can attract passionate donors. The Director will leverage the school's strong faith-based identity to build deep relationships with donors who share similar values.

-Parents and other community members are deeply invested in the school's mission, providing a strong foundation for fundraising and volunteer support.

-There is also potential to cultivate new major donors from within the Ave Maria community, greater Naples area, and even at the national level. There is a need to strengthen engagement with alumni and broader Catholic networks could unlock new funding sources.

-With the planned expansion, including a three-story wing, an expanded gym, and a chapel, the Director of Advancement can provide a clear and tangible case for financial support. The \$30 million capital campaign presents an opportunity to build long-term donor relationships and establish a lasting legacy for the school.

-The Director of Advancement will strengthen connections with local businesses and organizations to encourage additional corporate partnerships and support.

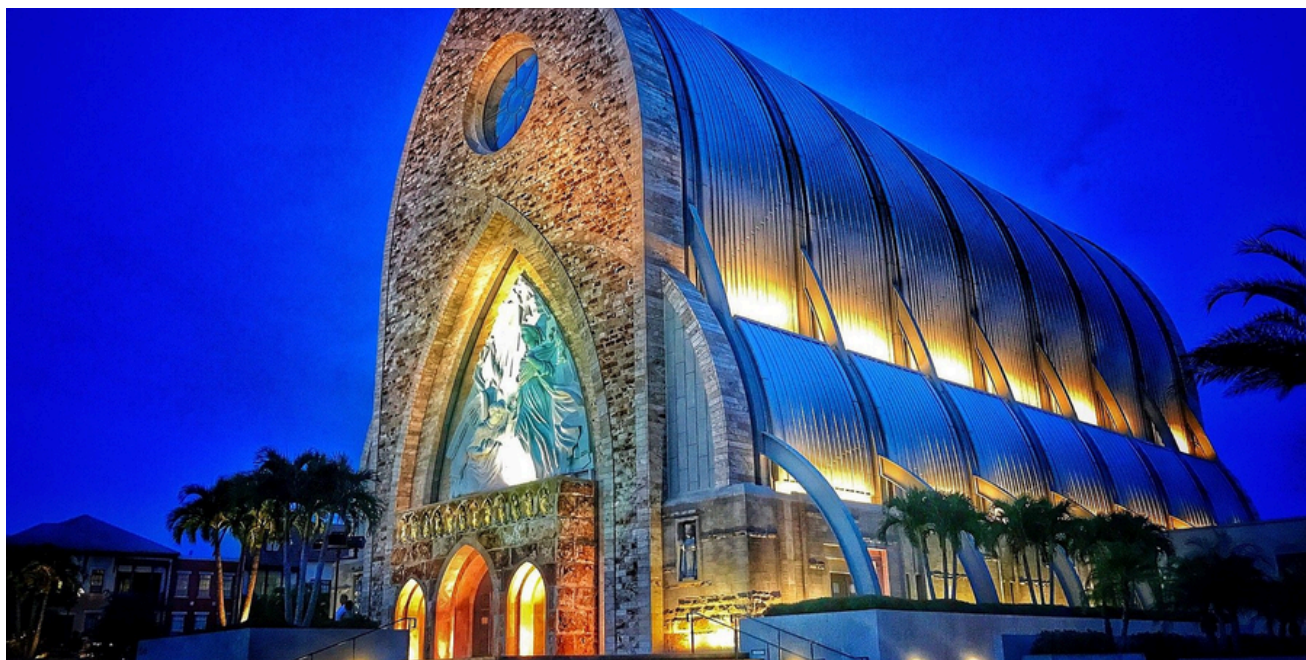
-The Director must not only be skilled in fundraising but also deeply understand and live the school's Catholic classical mission and be able to compellingly articulate that mission to potential donors.



ABOUT THE AREA

Ave Maria, Florida, is an intentionally designed Catholic community and town built around Ave Maria University and its iconic church, Ave Maria Parish. The palm-tree lined streets offer a family-friendly, faith-centered lifestyle, where families enjoy biking trails, outdoor activities and a close-knit, small town feel. Known for its strong Catholic identity, Ave Maria features daily Mass, faith groups, as well as university-sponsored intellectual and cultural events. Ave Maria is somewhat remote, with Naples being the nearest city, but this quaint atmosphere provides the perfect backdrop for a peaceful life. The town square hosts local businesses, like the Bean coffeeshop, restaurants, and Catholic bookstores, fostering a traditional and faith-filled culture. Ave Maria remains a unique place for Catholic families seeking a vibrant religious community.

The greater Naples-Fort Myers area offers year-round warmth, pristine beaches, and upscale restaurants. The Diocese of Venice covers the region including Sarasota, Fort Myers, Naples and Venice. The diocese is home to fifteen Catholic schools, many faith formation programs, and Catholic charities such as food pantries, disaster relief efforts, and pro-life ministries. Bishop Frank J. Dewane, leads the diocese, which is actively involved in promoting Catholic social teaching, evangelization, and priestly vocations.



APPLICATION PROCEDURE

To apply, please submit the following four documents, confidentially, and as separate PDF attachments.

- Cover letter that aligns your experiences and skill sets with the current needs of the school as you understand them.
- Current resume with all appropriate dates included.
- Statement of Catholic educational philosophy
- List of five references to include names, relationships, phone numbers, and email addresses (No references will be contacted without your knowledge and approval.)

Please include “Donahue Academy” in the subject field.



***Assemble all of the application materials
in one email to:***

Kyle Pietrantonio, Senior Partner
kpietrantonio@partnersinmission.com
Partners in Mission
(202) 390-0230
www.partnersinmissionslss.com



Our search consultants exclusively help Catholic schools identify, recruit, retain, and support the most culturally-fit and professionally-qualified Catholic school leadership executives. Whether you seek a Superintendent, President, Principal, Head of School, or Director of Advancement, or Enrollment, we have the expertise and network to help you find the perfect fit.

partnersinmissionslss.com

Partners in Mission School Leadership Search Solutions