



Wyoming Seminary College Preparatory School

Wyoming Valley, Northeastern, PA

Head of School

July 2022

Founded in 1844, [Wyoming Seminary](#), Sem, is a coeducational, day-boarding school that currently serves 795 students, Toddlers through Post Graduates. Sem is a school of numerous strengths, with a commitment to and reputation for excellence.

The school's location in the Wyoming Valley, dubbed the "valley with a heart," of Northeastern, PA is within two hours of New York and Philadelphia. The nearby Poconos, with its beautiful mountains and lakes, offer many opportunities for outdoor pursuits, including hiking and skiing. Additionally, the area boasts quality restaurants, sporting events, major musical acts, and the amenities of a more populous downtown area. It is a community that is home to a number of colleges.

Sem is being led during the current school year by a highly experienced Head of School (the Board has recently adopted this title rather than president) in an interim capacity. The school is seeking, for July 2022, an experienced, energetic, personable Head of School who is eager to fully invest in, lead, and inspire this school community.

Potential candidates are encouraged to review the school's website for a more in-depth introduction.

Mission and Motto

Within an exponentially changing world, Wyoming Seminary dares to teach our students to honor and strive for the true, the beautiful, and the good.

Wyoming Seminary's school motto, "Verum, Pulchrum, Bonum" served as the guiding spirit of Wyoming Seminary in 1844 and remains the words by which the school community lives today. We dare to teach students the truth that character matters; we emphasize the importance of friendships with others who look and think differently; and instill goodness.

Administration, Faculty and Staff

In addition to the Head of School, Sem's senior leadership team includes a Chief Financial Officer, Director of Admission & Financial Aid, Heads of Lower and Upper School, Chief Advancement Officer, and Directors of Athletics, Arts, and Technology. Other key administrators include a Dean of Student Life, Directors of College Counseling and Marketing & Communication, and a Physical Plant Manager. Food Service is managed by an outside vendor.

Sem employs nearly 200 faculty and staff to serve the needs of its students and campuses. Sem is fortunate to have numerous faculty members who have devoted many years of their professional careers to the school. Faculty members who have taught elsewhere prior to arriving at Sem share that the school's strong sense of community, collegiality, and the genuine niceness and positive engagement of its students are top reasons they love their work at Wyoming Seminary.

Students and Programs

As noted, there are nearly 800 students enrolled at Sem, beginning with the Toddler program that serves two-year-olds. There are 330 day students at the Lower School, Toddler through Grade 8. The Upper School has 465 students enrolled, including 185 boarders, from 21 states and 30 countries. Sem has been coeducational since its founding, and it has a long history of enrolling international students, valuing the enriching diversity of a community that reaches well beyond its immediate surroundings—a positive attractor for many local families.

The Lower School offers students a warm, supportive environment, facilitating academic achievement and a positive learning environment. The program emphasizes authentic communication and expression throughout the curriculum. Yearly, each class, PK-Grade 4, puts on a play, and Middle School students have the opportunity each year to participate in a Lower School Players production. Students learn through these experiences to be comfortable on stage. In 7th Grade, students take a public speaking class, and each 8th Grader prepares and delivers a speech to the entire Middle School—a wonderful rite of passage. A strong after school program offers additional enrichment opportunities for students, and middle school students can participate in athletics.

The Upper School offers students a wide-breadth of opportunities in academics, the arts, and athletics. Upper School students note their appreciation for an interesting range of academic courses, including independent study opportunities that are well supported by faculty. 22 Advanced Placement courses are offered, and Upper School students can choose an academic concentration in STEM/STEAM or Climate Science and Sustainability, programs that include very strong research components. Sem is a member of [Round Square](#), an international, diverse network of 200 like-minded schools, connecting and collaborating to offer world-class programs. Sem joined the Mastery Transcript Consortium in 2017. There is a very strong commitment to the Fine and Performing Arts, and student participation across the arts' disciplines is high. The athletic program is also a place of strength with 76% of Upper School students participating. A number of the sports teams enjoy great success and help attract both local and boarding students to Sem. This fall the Girls Tennis team won the State Championship. Field Hockey has a long tradition of strength and has achieved many team and individual accolades. The Boys Wrestling team was the 2020 National Prep Champions. The Girls Wrestling team, the only female high school wrestling team in PA, is supported by USA Wrestling as an accelerated, elite development program.

The Campuses

The Lower School campus is located in Forty Fort, across the Susquehanna River from Wilkes-Barre. The campus consists of a large, historical main building, housing all the Preschool-Grade 8

facilities, a Toddler Center, and field space. The main building originally served as the Wilkes-Barre Institute, one of Sem's ancestral schools, with roots going back to 1807.

The Upper School's expansive campus is in Kingston, approximately 10 minutes from the Lower School. This campus consists of numerous buildings, accommodating the residential community, a dynamic college preparatory program, and expansive arts and athletic facilities. The Upper School campus does include a house for the Head of School. Sem's website offers a detailed campus map that can offer candidates a good overview of the campus.

Sprague Hall is the main academic building. Nesbitt Hall serves as a science center. Pettebone-Dickson Student Center includes sports and administrative facilities. Buckingham Performing Arts Center, established in 1975, holds classrooms and an auditorium, and The Kirby Center for the Performing Arts, opened in 2014, boasts a beautiful state-of-the-art theater. The Stettler Learning and Resource Center houses admissions and the Kirby Library. A bit separate from main campus is the Great Hall, mainly used today for wrestling facilities. Carpenter Athletic Center is home to two gyms, a pool, several fitness studios, and the Charles Lull Tennis Center. Klassner Field and Nesbitt Stadium are located on the outskirts of campus. Boarding male students reside in Carpenter and Darte Halls, and boarding female students live in Swetland and Fleck Halls. 56 faculty members live on campus, housed in both dormitory apartments and houses contiguous to campus.

The Bell Tower on Sem's Kingston campus, an icon for the Sem community, is currently under renovation, and the Board has recently initiated a \$4.4M bond to invest in campus improvements.

Governance, Associations, Budget

There are 26 voting members of the Board of Trustees. The Head of School and two parent association representatives are Ex-Officio members of the Board, and six Trustee Emeriti and four Lifetime Trustees are included in Board activities. The majority of the Board members are alumni. Recent Board by-law changes have instituted term limits, bringing the Board more in alignment with NAIS' Principals of Good Practice. Currently the full Board meets three times a year, and the majority of Board work is done through committees.

The school was founded by members of the Methodist Church—and thus its Seminary name. Today individuals from every faith tradition are members of the community. The school's Methodist roots are reflected in the weekly Upper School Chapel service. Chapel is an opportunity for the whole Upper School community to come together, and the school chaplain leads a thoughtful service that can be appreciated by people of all, or no, denominations. Lower School students come together for a chapel service once each trimester.

Wyoming Seminary is accredited and/or licensed by the following organizations: The Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Education and by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church. Wyoming Seminary holds membership in the National Association of United Methodist Schools and Colleges, the Association of Boarding Schools, the College Board, the National Association of Independent Schools, the Secondary School Admission Test Board, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and the Council on

Religion in Independent Schools. Sem's last reaccreditation was successfully completed through a joint Middle States and PAIS process in 2018- 2019.

Sem's endowment is nearly \$85M. The school's annual budget is approximately \$25M. During the 2020-21 school year, annual giving totaled just over \$1.65M and the two previous years achieved totals over \$2M. Currently 65.2% of the student body, K-12, receive some type of financial assistant which includes: need based administrative aid; tuition remission for faculty and staff children; merit scholarships; reciprocity—agreements Sem has with local colleges for faculty and staff children to attend Sem at a discounted tuition.

Opportunities

The opportunity to lead Wyoming Seminary is an opportunity to join a school community with a rich history that engenders deep loyalty in its students, their parents, faculty, staff, and alumni, and it is one that values authentic personal interactions and commitment to community. This is a great opportunity for an energetic, positive school leader to partner with stakeholders to define and realize Sem's future direction. It is an opportunity for a talented leader to inspire change in a well-capitalized school with a long history and supportive constituents.

As the new Head of School engages in conversations with stakeholders, learning the culture and traditions of Sem, he or she will have the opportunity to partner with the Board to lead and engage the community in a comprehensive strategic planning process during the 2022-2023 school year. This is an essential undertaking for Sem at this juncture. It is an opportunity to examine and potentially reset numerous aspects of the school: mission focus, programs, size, and infrastructure. This undertaking will seek to answer questions and insure intentionality, setting the course for strategic priorities to ensure Sem is positioned well in today's market:

- *Who does Sem best serve? What is the school's academic identity?*
- *What is the optimal student enrollment?*
- *How does Sem secure a one-school position with two campuses and the complexities of a diverse day-boarding population?*
- *Are signature programs mission-aligned?*
- *How does Sem integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion practices to ensure that it is serving well and preparing all its students for the world today and their world tomorrow?*
- *Does the infrastructure—buildings, staffing, and policies—serve Sem students and programs effectively?*
- *How does Sem achieve financial sustainability while offering financial assistance to meet growing need and while compensating faculty and staff competitively and appropriately?*

A process that engages many stakeholders will serve the community and this key undertaking well, with over-arching goals of coalescing constituents around a vision and inspiring the support needed to secure Sem's future path. While there are numerous challenges and projects to be realized to take Sem forward, with invested, strategic, and action-oriented leadership, this is a school where a Head can leave a strong legacy and add an important chapter to Sem's long and rich history.

With the crafting of a strategic plan and the establishment of priorities, an ambitious capital campaign is anticipated within the next 3-5 years. A Head of School who revels in telling the school's story and inspiring others to invest in its future will enjoy the opportunities ahead to engender support for strategic priorities.

In recent years, the Sem's Board has been making positive strides towards a governance structure that is aligned with NAIS' Principals of Good Practice. This has included instituting term limits and establishing a committee structure, including a Head's Evaluation and Support Committee. With ambitious plans ahead for the school, a Head of School who has good experience partnering effectively with a well-functioning Board will be helpful in supporting this Board in realizing its full leadership potential on behalf of Sem.

Sem's community is one that will respond well to an accessible, visible, and personable Head of School. With the hope that the challenges of the pandemic will have subsided considerably, establishing opportunities to rebuild community will be key. Faculty will welcome a Head of School who seeks and values faculty input and contributions.

Enhancing community includes addressing the long-term challenge, which has been further exacerbated by the pandemic, of establishing stronger connections between the Lower and Upper Campus communities and strengthening a "one school" feeling. It will be important for a new Head of School to be visible on both campuses, and to work with Sem's senior leadership to find ways to enhance connections between the campuses, between faculty, and between faculty and administration.

Leadership Needs

Wyoming Seminary seeks an energetic, strategic, and personable leader who will fully embrace its community, mission, and culture. Sem's next Head of School will be an individual who has strong school leadership experience, who is enthusiastic about investing fully in this community, and who has the skills to build positive relationships and inspire others. The ideal next Head of School for Sem will be an individual who is a clear-eyed builder with the confidence and humility, appropriate patience and impatience, and the abilities to partner with and to lead others, establishing a headship tenure that will leave a needed legacy on this historic institution. Additionally, Sem's next Head of School will be:

- An experienced team leader and builder, who understands how to collaborate while being decisive and action-oriented
- An astute decision-maker who communicates effectively and who genuinely recognizes and appreciates opportunities to solicit the voices of others
- Authentically excited to be a visible and accessible leader who appreciates interacting with students of all ages, and who understands, ideally from first hand experience, the joys and demands of living in a residential community
- Enthusiastic about serving as chief ambassador with the ability to inspire others to invest in the future of Wyoming Seminary

- An individual who possesses the heart of an educator and the head of a business person, understanding the unique people in and priorities of an independent school while working towards long-term financial sustainability
- Adept at partnering with, while confidently directing and managing as needed, a Board of Trustees
- Highly respectful of faculty and staff, embracing and modeling a servant leadership mindset and a true appreciation for collaboration
- Welcomes and supports family engagement, and possesses the ability to connect with a diverse group of individuals
- Has the ability and meaningful experience to lead conversations and implement initiatives to support a diverse, equitable, and inclusive school community
- In possession of a successful track record as a problem-solver and program builder, and
- A role model who leads with integrity, grit, and a sense of humor and who *honors and strives for the true, the beautiful, and the good.*

Heading a large school requires a leader who revels in and effectively balances the myriad tasks and responsibilities that are intrinsic to the position. The ideal Head of School will be an individual who is both highly strategic and action oriented, embracing the challenges and opportunities demanded by two campuses and a boarding program. Sem's next Head of School will possess the strong interpersonal skills and a track record that prepares them well for this great opportunity.

For Consideration

Please send electronically: Resume, Letter of Interest, and Educational Philosophy or Personal Statement to:

Jane Armstrong

Independent Thinking

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617-332-3131

All inquiries will be treated confidentially and review of candidate files will begin immediately.