

CURRENTLY HIRING DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT, AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS/CFO



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THE OPPORTUNITY

The Thacher School, one of the most selective and highly regarded boarding schools in the nation, is beginning a national search for its next Director of Finance, Risk Management, and Strategic Partnerships/CFO.

Founded in 1889 by Sherman Day Thacher, the School serves 258 academically talented students from over 20 states and 11 countries in a rigorous college preparatory experience. The faculty and students live and work closely together on a 540-acre campus nestled in the foothills of the Los Padres National Forest in Ojai, California (85 miles north of Los Angeles). School life is governed by an Honor Code rooted in the core values of Honor, Fairness, Kindness, and Truth. Together, the school community commits to the belief that demands in the academic classroom, when combined with those of mountains and horses, of sports and the arts, produce independent minds, strong bodies, and powerful character. Thacher has an operating budget of \$30 million and an endowment of \$196 million.

Reports to:
Head of School

**Full-time, benefit-eligible,
exempt position**

**Thacher trains
young people in
the art of living
for their own
greatest good
and for the
greatest good of
their fellow
citizens in a
diverse and
changing world.**



STRATEGIC PLAN

Thacher's most recent Strategic Plan, completed in 2025, is the result of an 18-month planning process that welcomed the voices and perspectives of the broader community in creating a roadmap for the next exciting chapter in the School's long history.

The Plan commits to remaining faithful to what Sherman Day Thacher created:

- An intimate residential community firmly rooted in the Ojai Valley.
- An educational program bolstered by lessons learned in the outdoors and on horseback that shapes and inspires leaders for the greatest good.
- A community governed by the core values of Honor, Fairness, Kindness, and Truth.

Fundamentally, the plan must affirm and expand the School's ability to be meaningful, in the lives of its constituents and in the broader world:

- Producing graduates equipped to add disproportionately to the measure of good in the world.
- Welcoming deserving students from disparate backgrounds and serving as a springboard for social mobility and an incubator for principled leadership.
- Partnering with neighbors to help solve local challenges here in the Ojai Valley.
- Expanding the number of lives impacted by the extraordinary program and place that we've developed over 135 years.

It also embraces the responsibility to enhance the School's viability by:

- Attracting talented students who believe in our mission, embrace our values, and experience and contribute to a culture of belonging.
- Partnering with families who believe in our mission enough to invest significant resources and trust us with their children.
- Recruiting and retaining adults who embrace our intensive and rewarding relationship based educational model.
- Offering students a compelling set of choices that challenge, inspire, and nurture them in both their academic and co-curricular lives.
- Ensuring access for families from across the socioeconomic spectrum.

Finally, we recognize that this plan must also address the imperative of sustainability, including:

- Preparing our campus for the current and future ecological challenges we face.
- Safeguarding the future of the Horse and Outdoor Programs, two core elements of our identity as an institution.
- Embracing a values-based approach to incorporating and leveraging new technologies.
- Reinforcing a financial model that allows us to innovate and realize our ambitions.

We invite you to learn more about the Thacher community and its history, mission, and programs by visiting the School's website at thacher.org.





JEFF HOOPER

Head of School

Following a ten-month national search, Jeff Hooper was selected as the Thacher's tenth Head of School in July 2023 after having been at the School since 2002. Jeff graduated from Trinity University with a degree in Economics and International Studies and a minor in Spanish, and received a master's degree in Latin American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. He began his career at TMI Episcopal in Texas teaching Spanish and coaching football; he moved to Thacher in 2002 with his wife, Kara.

During his time at the School, Jeff has taught courses in Spanish, history, and economics. He also served as the head coach of varsity football—having himself played four years of football at Trinity University. Jeff appreciates the tightly knit community at Thacher and enjoys the Outdoor Program, whose trips into the Sespe, the San Rafael Mountains, and the southern Sierra have taught him a lot about camping. Guided by his love of Spanish, Jeff has explored Mexico and studied in Latin America. He lives on campus with his wife, Kara, and their two sons, Hayden '23 and Hiram '25.

Those who have worked with or know Jeff understand that he possesses the qualities the community values and more, including humility, kindness, empathy, compassion, and vigilance. As a teacher, administrator, and coach, Jeff has demonstrated his unwavering commitment to the School and its students. Whether in the classroom, on the field, or at the podium, Jeff's love of living and learning alongside adolescents is palpable, and his accessibility, presence, and interest in the lives of students and colleagues is evident.

At-A-Glance

Year Established

1889

Enrollment

258

Students of Color

56%

International Students

14%

Countries Represented

11

Boarding Students

225

Total Faculty & Staff

140

Student/Teacher Ratio

6:1

Financial Aid Budget

\$4.9M

Students Receiving Aid

31%

Endowment

\$196M

Sports Teams

28

Campus Size

540 acres



LOCATION

Ojai is a charming small city of just 7,580 residents located in Ventura County, California, which has a population of more than 800,000. Ojai is an hour and a half northwest of Los Angeles and a 45-minute drive to Santa Barbara. The city is known for its Mediterranean climate, boutique art scene, recreation opportunities, hiking, and farmers market of local, organic agriculture.

Set in a valley in the Topatopa Mountains, Ojai invites exploration of the outdoors year round with its warm spring and fall months and mild winters. Bordering the north, Los Padres National Forest and nearby Lake Casitas are popular recreation areas. Every year, the Ojai Music Festival features famed classical artists.

FINANCES

Thacher has a FY 2026 operating budget of \$30M which is supported by \$15M in net tuition revenues, \$5.5M from the annual fund, an endowment draw of \$8.5M and various other revenue sources. The School has \$19M in fixed rate debt at an interest rate of 3.03% and an endowment of \$196M. Standard and Poor's has given the School a AAA rating on its debt. Thacher spends about 27% of its gross tuition on financial aid.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Director of Finance, Risk Management, and Strategic Partnerships/CFO will join a school which is looking to expand enrollment, diversify revenue, and modernize and systematize operations in thoughtful ways consistent with the culture and history of the School.

The Director/CFO will oversee the business office and financial operations, oversee strategic partnerships, and develop other sources of revenue for the School, including summer programs, and oversee risk management broadly defined.

The Director/CFO will be creative and entrepreneurial, and will provide strategic leadership as a member of the senior leadership team. The successful candidate will be a thoughtful steward of the School's resources and culture, an excellent communicator, and will blend rigorous fiscal oversight with a collaborative spirit to foster a resilient, sustainable future for the Thacher community.

As a key member of the senior leadership team, the Director/CFO reports directly to the Head of School and collaborates closely with the Board of Trustees.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Develops and oversees financial policies, procedures, and internal controls to safeguard assets, protect confidential information, and ensure accurate financial reporting.
- Oversees school business office functions, including tuition billing and collection, accounts payable, contracting, payroll, benefits, accounting and reporting, regulatory reporting and compliance, and other business administration activities.
- Administers the annual \$30 million operating budget and leads the development of long-range financial models to ensure the School's enduring excellence and sustainability.
- Works closely with the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees to oversee the School's \$196 million endowment and ensure alignment with long-term goals.
- Participates in the development of school strategy, providing recommendations, financial analysis, projections, and other data to inform the process.
- Directs the School's insurance, legal compliance, and risk management protocols.
- Reviews and models various revenue-producing opportunities and ensures that revenues from auxiliaries are maximized.
- Reviews health and property insurance plans with the goal to identify innovative approaches to maximize impact while minimizing cost.
- Maintains accurate financial records, providing financial and budgetary information to school leadership.
- Reviews and authorizes all school contracts and agreements.
- Acts as primary contact for primary banking relationships for the School.
- Provides supervision and direction to the Controller, members of the Business Office team, and Summer Auxiliary Program Director (to be hired).
- Coordinates compliance reporting relating to school operations and debt management.
- Coordinates with the Directors of Advancement on all matters related to fundraising and stewardship of donors including gift accounting, compliance and management, tracking and reporting of restricted gifts.
- Attends Board meetings and serves as the primary administrative liaison to the Finance, Investment, and Audit committees of the Board, and assists with other committees as required by the Head of School.
- Serves as directed by the Head of School on any other project-related committees.



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Ensures effective stewardship of existing resources to address rising operational costs through disciplined financial management and operational efficiency.
- Assesses staffing needs and implement strategies to recruit, retain, and develop talent and foster a cohesive, high-performing, and mission-driven business office that values collaboration, expertise, and mutual respect.
- Reviews all processes and procedures in the business office to ensure that they are current, effective, and efficient.
- Explores and implements opportunities to leverage emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, to enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency.
- Collaborates with the Director of Enrollment to model the impact of the expansion of the student body on the financial sustainability and health of the School.
- Collaborates with the Director of Enrollment on the setting of tuition and on the strategic use of financial aid.
- Collaborates with the Director of Summer Programs to develops summer programs which are revenue positive and are consistent with the School's mission.
- Develops programs and opportunities for more collaboration and inclusion of the Ojai community with the School.
- Collaborates with the Board, Head of School, and Advancement Office on a planned campaign to support the strategic plan.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Contributes to the delivery of the mission, vision, and values of the school community.
- Builds, fosters, and participates in an inclusive school community.
- Models lifelong learning, flexibility and a growth mindset.
- Maintains a commitment to professional development.
- Maintains high standards of professionalism with students and colleagues.
- Exhibits enthusiasm for working with teenagers.
- Values collaboration with colleagues and participating actively in a community of students and adults.
- Embraces and actively participates in signature Thacher programs.
- Exhibits flexibility and adaptability to change as needed.
- Desire to be a part of a vibrant living and learning community

JOB QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree required; MBA, CPA, or equivalent advanced degree preferred.
- Minimum of 10 years of financial experience with increasing breadth and leadership responsibilities.
- Experience in an independent school, nonprofit, or higher education setting is strongly preferred.
- Superior communication skills, written and spoken.
- Superior interpersonal, organizational, leadership, and managerial skills.
- Superior analytical, modeling, and problem-solving skills.

COMPENSATION

Compensation is very competitive. The salary range is \$275,000-\$350,000. Final salary is based on experience relevant to the role and internal equity. Thacher offers a generous fringe benefit package, which includes a 403(b) match, healthcare coverage, and a broad range of other benefits, including full tuition remission for eligible dependents, use of campus facilities, and generous professional development support. The new CFO will not be expected to live on campus.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A criminal background check must be successfully completed before employment can begin.

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Nominations and applications are invited for this position. Review of applications will begin immediately, and candidate material received by May 18, 2026 will be assured full consideration, although recruitment will continue until an appointment is announced. Applications (including a cover letter and resume) must be uploaded to: <http://lapovsky.hiringthing.com>.

Lapovsky Consulting is assisting The Thacher School in this search. For nominations, questions, or additional information, please contact:

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The Thacher School is dedicated to providing equal opportunities to all individuals regardless of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran's status, or any other factor that is a prohibited consideration under applicable law.

