



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SEARCH

# UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

New York, New York

## APPLICATION PROCESS

### Prospective candidates

should send a letter detailing their interest in the position and their suitability for it, a current *curriculum vitae*, and a copy of original writing on any subject of interest to the candidate for this application.

These materials should be sent in one consolidated PDF to **each** of the following:

Doreen S. Oleson  
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**APPLICATION DEADLINE:**  
**March 15, 2018**

The Board of Trustees at the United Nations International School is launching a search for the School's next Executive Director and seeks a talented and experienced educator who will build on the past successes of this extraordinary School and take up the opportunities to lead the School into its next chapter of growth and development. The tenure of the next Executive Director will begin on 1 July 2019. (The Board reserves the possibility of making a July 2018 appointment should a qualified candidate be identified and available).

## MISSION

It is hard to imagine a more compelling mission statement for a school in 2017 than the mission of the United Nations International School in New York City, posted on its walls: "a better world." Founded in 1947, two years after the United Nations, UNIS enjoys a world-wide reputation as a leader among international schools, recognized for its role as a founding school for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. Celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> year, the School operates under the auspices of the United Nations and is distinguished by the cultural diversity of its community.

Closely tied to the identity and significance of the United Nations, this School enjoys a legacy that is unparalleled in terms of connections with governments, politicians, artists, and world citizens of note. The hallways and yearbooks of UNIS are filled with extraordinary individuals who have worked to make "a better world." From photographs of Eleanor Roosevelt and U Thant to Kofi Annan and Pablo Casals, among other international citizens and activists of note, students and adults are reminded daily that the mission of the School, along with the mission of the United Nations, calls us to be our best selves and to serve the world in positive and important ways.

To learn more about the **UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL:**  
[www.unis.org](http://www.unis.org)



## THE COMMUNITY

From the outset, a visitor to UNIS is struck by the international, multicultural nature of the students and families that attend the School. Over 110 states are represented in the student body, which provides an extraordinary opportunity for all students to understand the essence of a multilingual and multicultural community. Students reflected that their identities are often rooted in several countries and even transcend borders to embrace a shared global citizenship.

Over 90 languages are spoken by the families at the School. Multiple languages are heard in the corridors, and although the primary academic language is English, the social languages of the School are many and varied. The mother tongue program, as well as the commitment to academic instruction in eight languages, adds to the vibrancy of diversity in the community. And it is not unusual to see students switching among languages in a casual conversation in the hallways and at lunch.

Most important, there is a palpable appreciation for the international nature of the School community. Parents and students alike articulate—passionately and enthusiastically—their appreciation for the cultural diversity at the School. And faculty and staff consider the remarkable diversity of the

students a powerful contributing factor to the success of UNIS and to their own learning as well.

Parents also comment on the inclusivity their children have experienced at the School. “There’s no majority population,” one says. “Everybody is from everywhere,” says another. Parents appreciate the pastoral care and problem-solving used to resolve conflicts, such as the use of “peace tables” in Junior School, and they see these practices as an expression of the ethos of the School. Students are committed to the values of the United Nations in their everyday life and learn to be curious about divergent perspectives. One kindergarten parent said, “You don’t need to tell anyone at UNIS to save water” because even kindergarteners know the UN sustainable development goals, the dedication to quality education, clean water,

and gender equality, among others. Another parent remarked on her daughter’s singing “human rights” songs at home. Parents are uniformly complimentary of the social and cultural integration of their students into the classroom and larger community. One described the School as “a private school with a public school feeling.” A unique feeling of respect permeates the culture of the School.

UNIS welcomes a variety of international and host country families living in New York. At any given time, about 50-60% or more of the families in the School have some kind of affiliation with the United Nations as determined by admissions policy. It would be impossible to generalize about the demographics of the School. Its diversity, regardless of the parameters used to define that term, is striking. Parents support a variety of programs and events at the School, building community through organizing events such as the International Food Fair, language groups, support for families new to UNIS, and organizing the annual Gala.



The faculty and staff at UNIS are passionate and committed. They appreciate the talents, curiosity and joyfulness of their students and acknowledge that their devotion to the School arises from deep respect and affection for the students. The faculty is as diverse as the student body, hailing from countries as wide spread as Egypt, Myanmar, Brazil, Australia, and France, among many others. As a result, the students “learn to learn” from a panoply of internationally minded faculty, a recognized benefit of this culturally diverse faculty and staff. Parents declare that teachers are thoughtful and warm, making the School “a very human place, where children are welcomed from the very beginning.”

The faculty is experienced. At least 50% of the faculty has served the School for more than 15 years and at the last ceremony for service recognition, 30 faculty members were recognized for serving from 15 to 45 years at UNIS. With a faculty of 260 FTEs, the School also enjoys healthy rejuvenation of its

faculty, and this year 15 new teachers were hired. Employment benefits are competitive, and the Staff Association negotiates on behalf of the faculty and staff for compensation, benefits, and employment expectations on a regular basis.

The Board of Trustees at UNIS is attuned to the roles and responsibilities of a healthy governing body, clear about the needs of UNIS today and into the future, and eager to provide support to the new Executive Director. The self-perpetuating Board is made up of 18 Members, all of whom bring a talented, intelligent commitment to the School. The Secretary-General plays a central role in the governance of the School, preserving its institutional link to the United Nations, directly supporting the School’s mandate, and participating in its activities. The Secretary-General is supported in this function by his



Special Representative who sits on the Board. The Secretary-General appoints the Chair of the Board and nominates members of the Board of Trustees on recommendations from the Board’s Committee on Trustees. The current Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, has appointed Ms. Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, as Chair of the Board, and Ms. Joan McDonald, who was a UNIS Trustee for 12 years in the past, as his Special Representative. A significant number of Trustees are UN-affiliated but Board members also include parents, parents of alumni, UNIS alumni, and outstanding educational leaders. Among educators, Pearl Kane of Columbia University’s prestigious Klingenstein Program is a former Trustee and Virginia Roach, the Dean of the Fordham University Graduate School of Education, currently serves on the Board.



## THE STUDENTS

The students at UNIS are assigned to three divisions. In Manhattan: Junior School, Grades PreK-4; Middle School, Grades 5-8; and Tutorial House, Grades 9-12. In Queens: Junior School, Grades K-4; and Middle School, Grades 5-8.

The reenrollment rate at the School is high, particularly for an international school: 90%. Currently, the average stay at the School is 8.4 years, and 41% of last year's graduates were at the School from kindergarten. The School works cooperatively with New York City's independent schools to share admissions practices, although the School is quick to say—correctly—that UNIS is unique among NYC independent schools. Students who choose to leave the School for High School usually matriculate at the NYC examination public school programs or the highly specialized, competitive public high schools like Stuyvesant and Hunter College High Schools. Tuition levels are very competitive as compared with other independent schools in New York City.

Across the board, students and parents describe the UNIS experience as “formative,” from experiential education such as the UNIS-UN conference, which is held at the United Nations General Assembly Hall where the UNIS graduation also takes place, to travel opportunities and the language program. Students are aware of the wide socioeconomic diversity

at the School and feel that it gives them a real opportunity to understand all aspects of diversity, from cultural competency to the realities of urban living. One graduate opined that the students at UNIS are “stitched into the City” because of their friendships with students from such a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences in New York City.

The School prepares students to be agents of change in the world. Tutorial House students manage all aspects of the 50+ clubs program. Student Council representatives organize all the clubs as well as the Club Fair, and they estimate that the clubs are about 85% “active.” The range of student organizations is enormous, from the literary magazine to the Nepal Club that arranges a yearly trip to Nepal where UNIS students get involved with local students through various community-based projects. The UNIS UN and Model UN programs are particularly popular, and Ban Ki-moon, 8<sup>th</sup> Secretary General of the UN, made introductory remarks at a session recently. A commitment to service permeates the ethos of student life—one group is raising money to help build a school in Pakistan—and students affirm their heartfelt commitment to activism. Younger students are equally engaged. Students advocate for change within the School and build close relationships with faculty members and each other.





The Middle School program (Grades 5-8) provides each with “opportunities to explore, inquire, and develop confidence.” In social studies, students follow a course of study that integrates world history, geography, social sciences, host country, and the United

develop critical thinking and logical argument in addition to exploration of earth and space, chemistry, physics, biology, and research skills. Technology teachers develop collaborative units with subject area teachers across the board. Middle School students start the study of a second modern language in M3 (Grade 7), building on the language instruction begun during Junior School. Interscholastic athletic opportunities also begin in the Middle School.

Tutorial “Tut” House (Grades 9-12) aims to “encourage students to take risks in learning, be open-minded and reflective and, through an international perspective, develop an understanding of global issues.” Students are challenged to combine solid content knowledge with the skills to develop responsibility for their own learning. Critical thinking, effective communication, creative problem-solving, collaborative learning, and leadership skills are the goals of the program. In Tutorial House, the curriculum shifts from a more interdisciplinary approach to greater academic specialization

## THE PROGRAM

The Junior School program (PreK-Grade 4) is rich and varied, reflecting the School’s mission and rooted in a culture of inquiry. Language instruction in French and Spanish begins in pre-Kindergarten and aims to achieve fluency, not familiarity. Literacy and numeracy are strong and often individualized with a multi-faceted approach in both areas. Students are supported at a variety of reading levels, and there are several support faculty at all grades. The science program is based on investigation and is rich in connections to current environmental issues. The School takes a very broad view of history and social studies, with a curriculum that spans a wide array of global issues. Art and music are rich programs in the Junior School; the school sings, literally and figuratively. Student art work is proudly displayed throughout the School.

Nations. Classwork emphasizes active inquiry. In language arts, students use language as a means to clarify thinking and construct meaning through oral activities, writing in different genres, and reading meaningful literature. In math, students pursue understanding through practical tasks, real-life problems, and investigations of mathematical concepts. Process standards are used to deepen understanding of mathematical reasoning, problem solving, and computational fluency. Science classes are designed to



to prepare for the requirements of the UNIS Diploma, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma and IB Courses. Over 90% of UNIS students complete the rigorous IB full diploma with excellent results.

A signature program of the UNIS program, PreK-12, lies in the teaching of world languages. From PreK and kindergarten, students take either Spanish or French, which are taught either as foreign languages or as mother tongue. As from Grade 7, and until the end of their studies at UNIS, students opt for a further language, which they can choose from Spanish, French, Russian, Arabic, German, Mandarin, Japanese, and Italian. The program at Grade 8 includes an exchange trip with schools in Spain and France, to which the entire class may participate, which allows for an immersive experience in the use of the languages learned at school. A full mother tongue program is also available in the humanities for

students Grade 1 and higher. The governments of Italy, Spain, China, and Germany provide and/or fund some teachers for the School. Oman supports the Arabic language program, and Spain and France have accredited the School's language programs. UNIS is one of two schools in New York with agreements with both the French and Spanish governments for teacher identification and support. The program enhances language skills for different communicative situations and exposes students to broad cultural understandings of world societies.

UNIS has a strong arts program as well. Drama has been a particularly strong program at UNIS, beginning in the Junior School, with frequent opportunities for students to speak to their classmates and to perform for the School. Music and theater are fully embraced: productions both contemporary and classical are advertised throughout the School

regularly and often. Last year students at UNIS participated in a city-wide concert at Carnegie Hall; notably, the UNIS students were playing *original* scores.

UNIS has a strong developmentally based physical education and athletics program that uses the School's gymnasium, playground, and rooftop field spaces. Students in the Junior School have an excellent skills development program that feeds into opportunities for interscholastic sports in the Middle School and Tutorial House. UNIS belongs to one of the NYC athletic leagues. The students have won a number of championships over the past few years; the School is highly competitive in soccer, both boys and girls. The trophy case is overflowing!

For more detailed program information, please go to the UNIS website: [www.UNIS.org](http://www.UNIS.org)

## LOCATION AND FACILITIES

UNIS is comprised of two campuses: the primary facility on the East River in lower Manhattan and a smaller K-8 campus in Queens, near the site of the original UN School.

The four-story Manhattan campus, built in 1973, houses nearly 1,500 students, PreK-12. The campus is comprised of approximately 226K square feet. Surrounded on two sides by the East River, many of its classrooms and offices enjoy stunning views of New York City. The purpose-built facility has four floors including a roof gym in a bubble and an outside running track on the roof. There are approximately 200 classrooms, 15 science laboratories, and 3 libraries. The School has put forward a Capital Plan to renovate the campus, but also has concrete plans to address necessary maintenance and on-going improvements to the facilities.

The Queens campus houses Grades K-8, Junior and Middle Schools, and currently enrolls 140 students.





Located in Jamaica Estates, the school is warm, friendly and has a suburban feel. A few years ago, UNIS acquired a property next door to the Queens campus, and created a wonderful playing and recreational field. There is strong loyalty to the Queens campus and program, and the School is committed to its maintenance and well-being. Significantly, a majority of students who graduate from Middle School at Queens matriculate to the Manhattan campus for high school and others often joins selective public high schools in the city.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### **Academic Vision and Excellence.**

UNIS seeks an academic leader with the vision and experience to enhance program excellence for the PreK-12 program. Central to this work will be establishing the alignment, articulation, and documentation of the academic program with specific attention to the PreK-Grade10 curriculum that leads to the well-established IB

Diploma Program in Grades 11-12. Clarifying and smoothing the transitions from Junior School to Middle School to Tutorial House will be part of the work. Implementing a collaborative professional learning community with shared expectations will be important.

### **Communication and Connection.**

UNIS seeks a leader who is visible in the community, present, articulate about and involved in the daily operations of the School community. Transparency, inclusivity, and connections to the entire community—students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, the United Nations, and other external constituents—will be critical factors for success. Gravitas, combined with warmth and empathy, are sought in the next ED. Unquestioned integrity and clear communication practices are important personal qualities and skills sought in the next Executive Director.

### **Operational systems and**

**Facilities.** UNIS seeks a leader who is a strategic and pragmatic thinker and will be attentive and effective in implementing efficient systems throughout the organization. This challenge extends as well to the aging facility in Manhattan where the implementation of significant maintenance projects is being undertaken. Managing facilities needs and improvement will be important.

**Long-term commitment.** UNIS seeks a leader who will make a long-term commitment to the leadership of the School to ensure the wise and sustainable embedding of best practice in education and sound management protocols for the entire organization. The ability to mentor and build on a talented leadership team will also be an important ingredient for success in addition to attracting, hiring, and retaining an outstanding faculty.



# KEY PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND PERSONAL QUALITIES DESIRED

## Professional Experience:

- A record of sustained leadership success, preferably as an Executive Director
- Experience working in an international, multi-lingual educational community
- Deep familiarity with the expectations of high-performing international schools and the successful implementation of the IB Program
- Successful implementation of schoolwide curriculum alignment as well as current research-based educational strategies
- Proven track record of working in partnership with an international and aspirational Board of Trustees
- Solid experience of recruiting, hiring, and retaining an outstanding faculty as well as managing effective faculty supervision and evaluation
- Well-developed skills in strategic and capital project planning for an urban school with two campuses
- Successful facilities and financial management skills and experience

## Personal Qualities:

- Gravitas and a heartfelt understanding of the mission of UNIS and of the goals of the United Nations
- Deep understanding of global perspective in an international learning environment
- The ability to inspire and develop a collaborative, dynamic learning community
- Unquestioned integrity and impactful communication skills
- Success in working in concert with and leading a strong and organized faculty and staff
- A track record of visibility and the ability to build community among varied constituencies with warmth and a sense of humor

