The Search for a
DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

The College of Wooster announces its search for a Director of Alumni Relations and an expectation to bring strategic and affirming leadership to a critically important constituency of this highly selective liberal arts college. The new Director will be asked to lead a program that is poised at a moment of uncommon opportunity. Three of the most significant events in the history of a private college – the celebration of a landmark sesquicentennial anniversary, the inauguration of a new president, and the launch of the College’s largest-ever campaign – will occur in the next year, between October 2016 and April 2017. Beginning with this exciting time, the new Director will be asked to lead an alumni program that is expected to move well beyond the status quo.
WOOSTER: A Distinctive Alma Mater

Long known as a top national liberal arts college, The College of Wooster has distinguished itself by making Independent Study (I.S.) the cornerstone and inspiration of its undergraduate curriculum for nearly 70 years. As a “signature work for all students,” I.S. has historically and consistently been a rigorous, in-depth, year-long experience of inquiry or creative expression.

By working in partnership with a faculty member to conceive, organize, and complete a topic of the student’s choosing, every Wooster student develops abilities valued by employers and graduate schools alike: confidence, independent judgment, critical thinking, creative problem solving, and strong written and oral communication skills. This long standing educational tradition has carried Wooster to a new level of academic distinction.

In a survey of 30,000 college graduates, the Gallup organization recently found that having a mentor in college and working on a long-term project were two of the most powerful practices linked to long-term satisfaction in work and life. Brandon Busteed, executive director of Gallup Education, has hailed Wooster’s I.S. Program as “exactly what should be happening” in college today. https://youtu.be/fjSkda8TuoU

The College of Wooster is now recognized as America’s Premier College for Mentored Undergraduate Research. When the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) launched its Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative early in 2015, it highlighted six member institutions for their distinctive educational programs. Wooster was the sole liberal arts college selected, as an exemplar of the transformative impact of mentored student research. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFMLzUiXYOo
GOVERNANCE GROUPS

Several formal structures provide important alumni counsel to Wooster’s welfare.

- **The Alumni Board** As a 23 member elected advisory group, the Alumni Board actively supports and evaluates programs on and off the campus that increase alumni engagement in the life of the College, promotes dialogue among and between alumni and all other constituencies of the College on issues of importance to Wooster’s welfare, financially supports the College, and advances Wooster’s position as a national liberal arts college. The Director of Alumni Relations serves as liaison to the Board and coordinates all of the Board’s related activities. With the guidance of the Director, the Alumni Board works in concert with several structured affinity groups. Support for these groups is spread among staff and includes the W Association, Black Alumni Council, Going True, and the LAW Group.

- **Class Officers** Officers serve as liaisons between each graduating class and the College. They are elected every five years during Alumni Weekend and are responsible for tasks such as planning reunions, keeping in touch with classmates, and submitting class notes to the Wooster Magazine.

- **Student Engagement** The alumni office has spear-headed a nine-year plan (four years while students and first five years out) to build class unity, awareness around Wooster’s mission and education, and solicitations for The Wooster Fund.

VOLUNTEERISM

The opportunity for alumni engagement at Wooster has never been more robust.

- **Scots In Service** Wooster alumni, parents, and friends celebrate Scots in Service – a 15 year tradition -- by gathering together to serve their local communities. Service projects are organized by alumni in different cities across the nation, totaling some 25 cities and involving hundreds of volunteers, all reflecting the strong service mission at the College.

- **Alumni Admissions Advocates** More than 600 alumni volunteers assist with recruiting efforts throughout the year. Alumni represent Wooster at college fairs, information sessions, off-campus interviews, and receptions, and send handwritten notes to newly admitted students.

- **APEX** Since 2012, an emerging program of Advising, Planning, Experiential Learning (APEX) has presented a vibrant opportunity for alumni engagement. By integrating seven services for students in a single physical location http://discoverapex.wooster.edu, APEX has become a dynamic hub where students can meld classroom experiences with experiential learning, scholarship, and career path planning. Alumni interest is growing at a rapid rate. http://wooster.edu/academics/apex/alumni/alumni/
About the Alumni Program

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Black & Gold Weekend**  Wooster alumni, parents, and students celebrate together at the new Black & Gold Weekend (Homecoming and Family Weekend as one) with events like musical performances, departmental open houses, and a tailgate lunch.

- **I.S. Monday**  During I.S. Monday, a campus event in March when senior research projects are due, The Office of Alumni Relations sponsors happy hours in various cities throughout the U.S. In 2016, there were I.S. Monday celebrations in 26 cities. The I.S. requirement at Wooster provides a distinctive thread that ties six decades of Wooster alumni together.

- **Regional Events**  Regional events are planned throughout the year and across the country to bring alumni together and connect them back to Wooster. While most regional events are orchestrated by staff, occasionally we assist alumni volunteers who wish to plan simple events in their areas.

- **Alumni Weekend**  Hundreds of alumni return to Wooster each June to celebrate their reunions. Plans are made for classes ranging from the 5th-year reunion to the 70th. Attendance ranges from 1,100 to 1,300 alumni and guests, and activities include social opportunities, meals, happy hours, faculty and alumni lectures, live music, beer tastings, tours of the city, alumni awards, the annual meeting of the Alumni Association, and reunion giving recognition.

THE WOOSTER FUND

The Director of Alumni Relations is a key partner within the annual giving operation to jointly promote engagement and philanthropy. The goals of the alumni relations strategic plan are directly tied to development and institutional goals, as well as to those that directly move alumni involvement forward through a cycle of increasing connection. This means that The Wooster Fund goals around participation and retention are also Alumni Relations goals, as we build a foundation of connections and support engagement by asking for gift and stewarding volunteerism.
The Agenda for the Alumni Director

Considering the alumni program’s wide range of activity, the new Director will have the opportunity to make a significant difference in the life of Wooster’s alumni family. Several important initiatives provide an exciting agenda for the new Director.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Rooted in a campus culture of data evaluation and planning, Wooster has been engaged in assessing the effectiveness of its alumni relations programs through a series of independent reviews and self studies since 2012. The overall strategic plan (Inspiring Abundant Alumni Engagement), which has grown out of these studies, has identified several levels of involvement by alumni. It sets forth specific goals to move alumni to a more involved profile, thereby broadening the pyramid of alumni volunteers and philanthropic supporters. The Director of Alumni Relations should be comfortable with program assessment based on metrics and will be asked to bring his/her creativity to the implementation of this plan over the next several years.

INTEGRATING ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT AND PHILANTHROPY

While mainly carrying the direct responsibility for program development and alumni engagement, the Director must also collaborate with the development team in supporting alumni giving. Until 2013, Alumni Relations and The Wooster Fund (Annual Fund) were linked in the same office. That year, the Wooster Fund was moved to a direct report to the AVP for Development.

The new Director of Alumni Relations will be successful to the extent that he/she can maintain collaborative relationships with the other members of the advancement team. The partnership between Alumni Relations and annual giving in sharing data, planning events in which both giving and volunteering are celebrated, and establishing mutual service/philanthropy goals will be a key to this success. In carrying out the strategic plan, the new alumni director must be knowledgeable about and engaged in the fund-raising program at Wooster.

SUSTAINING AND ENRICHING THE ALUMNI PROGRAM

As The College of Wooster gains distinction, so too should its alumni program. The program’s status quo will not sustain momentum for an increasingly sophisticated program. The new Director can sustain and enrich by:

- Assessing the current program and identifying areas in which it may not be meeting the needs of alumni;
- Creatively achieving the goals of the strategic plan;
- Expanding the manner in which technology and social media are used to engage alumni;
- Continually creating opportunities for engagement that will enhance Wooster’s philanthropic culture;
- Actively collaborating with colleagues across campus to broaden the base of activities for alumni engagement.
REACHING ALL SEGMENTS OF THE ALUMNI FAMILY

While often thought of as a unified constituency, it is important to recognize that alumni interests vary by age groups, special affinities, diverse cultural groupings, and collegiate experiences that reflect different times in Wooster’s history. The Director’s sensitivity to these differences while remaining inclusive in reaching all segments of the alumni family, will reinforce his/her effectiveness.

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP

As the campus-based “face” of the Alumni Relations program, the Director will be expected to sustain a warmly personable and effectively energetic leadership role with all members of the alumni family. These leadership skills will also be important with other Wooster constituencies.

- Wooster’s board of trustees, through its alumni members and its overall governance responsibility, is continually interested in the welfare of the alumni program.
- Wooster’s faculty and staff should be nurtured as among the most significant college connections that graduates carry with them throughout their lives.
- Wooster’s students should be reminded regularly of their future role in the welfare of their alma mater, by instilling early values of involvement and philanthropy in their post-undergraduate lives.

The new Director has many audiences in which to extend his/her leadership.

PRACTICING MANAGEMENT

Complementing the buoyant leadership skills that will support the Director’s success will be a fundamental ability to care for detail and collaborate with colleagues across the campus. An intense schedule of event planning makes these efforts particularly important. The ability to set priorities, communicate clearly, evaluate, guide, and empower staff, and work with finite fiscal resources are all mainstream activities on the Director’s daily management agenda.
Desired Attributes

It has been suggested that the attribute list for the next Director of Alumni Relations should reflect many of the qualities that Wooster seeks to instill in its graduates. Independent thinking, collaborative inquiry, effective communication, respect for diversity, and social responsibility all help to define the qualities that will help to ensure the success of the new Director. Wooster and non-Wooster alumni are encouraged to apply.

The candidate of choice will have a baccalaureate degree as a minimum and significant experience that reflects an understanding of higher education, the liberal arts, alumni programming, and fund-raising. Experiences outside of the academy that will support the Director’s role could also be valuable. Desired personal characteristics include an affirming and outgoing personality, integrity, authenticity, warmth, and a sense of humor. In addition, the following professional qualities will be important:

- **Creative and enterprising leadership**, with a frequent appetite for innovation
- **Strong verbal and written communication skills**
- **Ability to manage collaboratively** and motivate others
- **Strategic thinking** in the assessment of programs and the implementation of plans
- **Proven human relations skills**
- **Ease in developing a strong on-campus presence**
- **Enthusiasm for publicly representing the College** and the Alumni Program
- **Accomplished computer skills** and technological understanding
- **Versatility** in dealing with a wide variety of alumni interests
- **Familiarity with Wooster’s distinctiveness**, traditions, and history
- **Willingness** to travel
The Application Process

The Director’s Search Committee will be accepting nominations and applications on a rolling basis throughout the late spring and early summer. The candidate pool will initially be narrowed in late June, although applications will be accepted until the Director is appointed. For most favorable consideration, applications should be submitted by June 17, 2016. The Director will be invited to begin work on or about August 1.

Dr. Thomas B. Courtice is the search consultant assisting with this search. Nominators and prospective candidates may contact him at: Tom.Courtice@gmail.com or 614/395-6631. All inquiries, nominations, and applications will be received in full confidence.

When complete, application materials should be submitted to:
Ms. Laurie Houck
Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations
Chair, Director of Alumni Relations Search
WoosterAlumniRels@gmail.com

Application materials should include:
- A letter that responds to the “Agenda for the Alumni Director” and the “Desired Attributes”
- A current resume or CV
- The names and contact information for three references, none of whom will be contacted without the formal permission of the candidate
While many institutions founded as undergraduate colleges have added graduate and professional programs and eventually transformed themselves into universities, Wooster very consciously took a different path. Founded by Presbyterians in 1866, it opened its doors at the University of Wooster on September 8, 1870, with a faculty of five and a student body of thirty men and four women. By 1915, the university had several graduate divisions, including a medical school. Ultimately, the board of trustees and a majority of the faculty voted against further expansion and in favor of closing down the existing graduate programs, in order to focus solely on undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences. With that sharpening of strategic focus came a new name, The College of Wooster, and an educational program framed in a residential setting where students learn in many venues and in many ways.

In 1969, the Presbyterian Synod of Ohio relinquished its ownership of the College, and Wooster became an independent, private liberal arts college. Today, Wooster enrolls approximately 2,000 students, from 45 states and 44 countries, who choose from more than 50 academic programs in the sciences, humanities, social sciences, and the arts.

In 2007, the College concluded the most successful comprehensive fund-raising campaign in its history. Independent Minds: The Campaign for Wooster exceeded its $122 million goal by more than 20 percent, bringing in $147.9 million to support the College’s most important priorities. The campaign made possible the construction of new residence halls and academic buildings, a new admissions center and student health center, and the renovation of Kauke Hall, the iconic academic building that is the physical and symbolic heart of the campus. It also strengthened Wooster’s financial foundation by adding $56.7 million to the endowment, and generated excitement and pride among the Scot faithful. Since then the College has raised $40 million to build the new Williams Hall of Life Science, scheduled to open in the Fall of 2018. Currently, the College is nearing the announcement of a new comprehensive fund-raising campaign.

Perhaps nowhere is the momentum more evident than in a fiercely competitive enrollment marketplace. Since 2007, applications for admission to Wooster have jumped 80 percent. Wooster has become more selective, more international, and more diverse. The admit rate has improved from 74 percent to 55 percent over the past eight years and half of this year’s incoming first-year students are in the top 10 percent of their high school class. Domestic multi-ethnic and international students will account for about one in three members of the first-year class, and one in five are eligible for Pell Grants.
Fast Facts

Founded on December 18, 1866

Located in Wooster, Ohio, a community of 26,000, approximately 55 miles southwest of Cleveland

**Campus:** 240 acres

**Academic calendar:** Semesters

**Degrees conferred:** Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music, and Bachelor of Music Education

**Full-time faculty:** 171

**Full-time faculty holding Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree:** 96%

**Student-faculty ratio:** 11 to 1

**Total enrollment (2016):** 2,058
  - 55% women, 45% men
  - 19% domestic students of color
  - 10% international
  - 35% Ohio, 65% non-Ohio
  - 45 states and 44 countries represented

**Students living on-campus:** 99%

**Tuition, fees, room & board (2015-16):** $55,600

**Students receiving financial aid:** more than 75%

**Average aid package:** $35,081

**Students who are Pell Grant recipients:** 19%

**Endowment market value (April 30, 2015):** $274 million

**Athletics:** 23 intercollegiate teams (NCAA Division III)

**Nickname:** Fighting Scots

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