The Board of Trustees announces the search for the 12th president of The College of Wooster and invites nominations and applications for this distinctive opportunity to exercise bold and engaged leadership at one of America’s most distinguished colleges. At a time when the agility of all higher education is being tested, Wooster offers a clear message of confidence based on its educational vitality, financial strength, and commitment to excel as a national liberal arts college. The momentum at Wooster around these qualities is palpable.

The current transition in presidential leadership at Wooster is being handled with care and purpose. After the remarkably successful eight-year tenure of President Grant Cornwell, Dr. Georgia Nugent is serving as Wooster’s interim president in 2015-2016. While sustaining Wooster’s profile of accomplishment in the coming year, President Nugent will also engage the trustees, faculty, and staff in supporting the agenda for her successor, that appointment to commence on or about July 1, 2016.
The College of Wooster is America's premier college for mentored undergraduate research. http://www.wooster.edu/academics/research/ Wooster offers an excellent, comprehensive liberal education, culminating in Independent Study (I.S.), a “signature work for all students,” which is a rigorous, in-depth project 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 judgement, critical thinking, creative problem solving, and strong written and oral communication skills. http://www.wooster.edu/about/leadership/mission

Brandon Busteed, executive director of Gallup Education, has hailed Wooster’s Independent Study program as “exactly what should be happening” in college today.

Wooster’s educational program is conceived and designed integrally to prepare students for Independent Study, beginning with their first semester in the First-Year Seminar on Critical Inquiry. Independent Study has been the cornerstone and inspiration for Wooster’s curriculum for nearly 70 years. http://www.wooster.edu/academics/research/is/

When the Association of American Colleges and Universities marked its centennial and launched its LEAP (Liberal Education and America’s Promise) initiative earlier this year, 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

In the largest ever 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 Independent Study program as “exactly what should be happening” in college today. https://youtu.be/fjSkda8TuoU

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 as 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 47 states and 39 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 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. The campaign built the runway for what has followed.

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. This year, as of May 4, the College received 5,730 applications for 550 spots in the first-year class.

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 the median standardized test scores of this year’s entering class will be near the 87th percentile nationally. Domestic multiethnic and international students will account for about one in three members of the first-year class, while one in five are eligible for Pell Grants. Total enrollment is stable at approximately 2,000 students, a notable situation in a highly competitive regional and national climate.
Wooster has made critical investments in its program, plant, and facilities. The College has launched new majors in neuroscience and East Asian studies, and minors in environmental studies, Latin American studies, and South Asian studies. A new student residence hall, Gault Manor, and the Scot Center, a stunning, LEED Gold certified athletic and recreation facility, have come on line. Upgrades to improve the energy efficiency of campus buildings are reducing the College’s carbon footprint by as much as 36 percent and yielding hundreds of thousands of dollars in operational savings each year. This year, a 113-year-old former elementary school was transformed into the College’s newest/oldest student residence hall, Gault Schoolhouse.

In 2012, the College launched APEX, which integrates seven student services programs in a single physical location. APEX enables Wooster students to make connections between their academic interests and professional goals, and find the resources to explore those possibilities. More than a typical center providing coaching on career and writing, APEX is a dynamic hub that invites all students to integrate their experiences in the classroom with experiential learning, scholarship, and career path planning. Still in its infancy and evolving rapidly, APEX is already being hailed as a breakthrough model for its comprehensive approach to blending students’ campus, classroom, and life experiences.

https://www.wooster.edu/academics/apex/
A Sharp Strategic Focus

Demonstrating a strong commitment to shared governance across various constituencies, the College practices strategic planning as an on-going process, rather than a once-every-some-years event. Integral to the success of this process was the creation (2015) of the faculty/staff Strategic Planning and Priorities Advisory Committee (SPPAC). Three objectives guide the work of the president, the board of trustees, SPPAC, and other constituencies:

- To fulfill our educational purpose with distinction.
- To strengthen the foundations of our college.
- To sustain our momentum by developing a campus-wide culture of planning that influences all decision-making, resource allocation, and assessment efforts.

Each year, the president, the board chair, and the College’s leadership team agree upon a specific set of strategic initiatives that become the organizing focus for the year’s work. These initiatives are then communicated widely by the president and the board chair in an annual strategic priorities memo. http://www.wooster.edu/about/leadership/president/speeches/priorities14-15/

This approach to planning was one of the factors cited, along with a “strong balance sheet” and “seasoned senior leadership team,” by Moody’s Investors Service in reaffirming the College’s A1 credit rating and stable outlook. “The A1 long-term rating is based on Wooster’s healthy balance sheet resources providing a solid cushion of pro-forma debt and operations, coupled with a relatively modest debt position given the college’s debt policy and proven ability to fundraise for capital projects,” Moody’s wrote in their opinion, released on May 4, 2012. “The rating also incorporates strong management and governance practices evidenced through a comprehensive strategic planning process that includes integrating goals and metrics with realistic financial modeling and capital needs, as well as resources.”

Fast Facts

- Full-time faculty: 171
- Full-time faculty holding Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree: 96%
- Student-faculty ratio: 11.4 to 1
- Total enrollment (2014-15): 2,066
  - 55% women, 45% men
  - 18% domestic multiethnic students
  - 8% international students
  - U.S. residents: 39% Ohio, 61% non-Ohio
  - 47 states and 39 countries represented
- First year retention: 90%
- Students living on-campus: 99%
- Athletics: 23 intercollegiate teams (NCAA Division III)
- Student Life: 120 organizations and a robust program including:
  - Community Service
  - Club Sports
  - Greek Life
  - And much more . . .

Tuition, fees, room & board (2014-15): $53,600
Students receiving financial aid: more than 75%
Average aid package: $33,022
Students who are Pell Grant recipients: 18.7%
Operating budget (2015-16): $81 million
Endowment market value (April 30, 2015): $274 million
Alumni: 23,000
Annual fund results (2014-15): $3.1 million
Campus: 248 stunningly handsome acres
- Located in the City of Wooster (26,000 pop.)
- 60 miles southwest of Cleveland
- 90 miles northeast of Columbus
The Agenda for New Leadership

Wooster draws great confidence from the combination of its past successes and the promise of new opportunities. The ability to bring ingenuity and strength to the Wooster presidency is matched by the expectation that new leadership will continually refine a fresh and sustainable vision for the College’s future.

While further strengthening Wooster’s academic and fiscal accomplishments, its leadership must respond to a dynamic and rapidly evolving environment to assure the institution’s effectiveness and vitality. With the engagement of a gifted faculty and loyal support staff, leading the College to new levels of educational outcomes and institutional achievement is at the heart of the charge to Wooster’s next president. To accomplish this, the leadership agenda for Wooster’s next president includes:

Reinforcing the Centrality of the Liberal Arts
At its core, Wooster will continue to be an excellent residential undergraduate college committed to the liberal arts. The new president must be a passionate advocate for the liberal arts and, in particular, he/she must be able to communicate with enthusiasm the transformative impact of mentored undergraduate research and Independent Study. Interpreting the value of a Wooster education will be important for multiple audiences.

- Prospective students and their families need to understand the relevance of the Wooster curriculum to their growth and transformation as undergraduates and their personal and career success after graduation.
- The campus community will benefit from a presidential vision for evolving and enhancing the teaching and learning environment.
- Wooster’s president should be heard frequently, off campus and on, as an influential contributor to the national dialogue about the value of the liberal arts.

Strengthening a Strategic Ethos
In concert with a highly motivated and collaborative faculty, a gifted administration, and well-informed trustees, Wooster’s new president will be relied on to frequently generate new ideas and fresh initiatives, many of which will merit timely review and adoption. The annual drafting of the strategic priorities memo by the president and the board chair underscores the importance of Wooster’s strategic planning paradigm and the development of a sustainable culture of planning, both of which will allow for prioritization of these new initiatives.

With SPPAC serving as an advisory locus for Wooster’s strategic processes, the new president must focus on strategic decision-making in the face of finite financial and human resources. The Wooster president must be comfortable leading the campus and the trustees in open discourse...
The Agenda for New Leadership

about the college’s aspirations, and in making decisions about the implementation of initiatives that rank highest in the order of enhancing effective implementation of Wooster’s mission.

Championing Diversity

The intercultural competence of the next president will be expected to provide critical traction for developments that are currently focused in Wooster’s Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Diversity and cultural inclusivity are core values in Wooster’s educational experience. A further effort to build and foster a thriving domestic and international multicultural community that enables participants to flourish is an ongoing objective in Wooster’s plans for the future.

While acknowledging that this objective may elude many liberal arts colleges, Wooster intends to redeem fully the benefits of intercultural living and learning through its undergraduate experience.

Wooster is committed to engaging campus members of underrepresented groups based on socioeconomic status, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. The new president will have a clarion opportunity to foster campus and community sensitivity around this engagement, while strengthening the programs that build and support diversity and well-being in the student body, faculty, and staff.

Promoting Global Engagement

Wooster prides itself on its commitment to international scholarship and global understanding at all levels. Through the research of professors and students, interdisciplinary majors and programs, curriculum, study abroad opportunities, and guest lectures, the College is committed to strengthening its role and impact in the international community. The next president should be invested in the global aspects of the College, finding new ways to expand the reach of its program and promoting global ethics, citizenship, and learning.

Enriching the Campus Community

The campus community will look to a new president to enrich and sustain the important sense of collegiality that the College has long valued. The new president’s skills must include an ability to articulate a compelling vision with clarity, to engage with people on a genuine basis, to listen with care, and to respond to campus issues with thoughtful involvement. Wooster’s campus ethos is most sharply in sync when efforts at full transparency are prominent in the day-to-day life of the College.

Students recognize that they are the focal point in this intimate residential community, largely as a result of the teaching and mentoring that they receive in various venues. The president must be comfortable fostering this personalized student-centeredness through her/his own visibility, accessibility, and engagement in the life of the College.
The Agenda for New Leadership

Inspiring Wooster’s Philanthropic Culture
Immediate engagement in advancement will await the new president. Her/his arrival will coincide with the fourth year of the College’s comprehensive campaign – Wooster’s Promise: A Campaign for Our Future. The campaign goal will be confirmed in 2016-2017. The campaign is designed to build scholarship endowment, add endowed faculty support funds, enhance APEX, provide funding for a new integrated life sciences center, and bolster The Wooster Fund (annual fund). The $40 million goal for building the life sciences center has already been surpassed and ground will be broken early in the 2016-2017 college year. Wooster will celebrate the 150th anniversary of its founding in the fall of 2016; the timing of the public phase of the campaign is to be determined.

Warmly engaging the alumni family and other external constituencies, communicating the Wooster story, and using the strategic plan to establish priorities on which future fund raising will be based are all opportunities awaiting the new president. To capitalize on all of these opportunities, the president must be personally engaged as the chief fundraiser for The College of Wooster.

Distinguishing Wooster
Despite enhanced fundraising for operations and endowment growth, Wooster will continue to be primarily dependent on tuition as its main source of revenue. Recognizing the recent successes of the admissions program, a new president must be prepared to analyze and further refine, where appropriate, the overall enrollment management program. Continued shaping and articulating of Wooster’s “brand” will sharpen the College’s competitive edge in attracting a robust pool of prospective students.

New leadership will be asked to build on existing strengths and create a preeminent education profile that will further distinguish the College among leading private liberal arts colleges. As the premier college for mentored undergraduate research, Wooster’s flagship I.S. program must continue to evolve to remain strong, effective, and distinctive. Additional efforts at distinction could include the further globalization of the Wooster experience, expanded opportunities for experiential learning and civic engagement, and appropriate applications of new technologies in a strongly personalized teaching/learning environment, to name a few. On an ongoing basis, Wooster’s president will be expected to foster the recruitment, support, and retention of high quality faculty who value teaching, mentoring, and scholarship.

Maintaining Financial Equilibrium
Wooster is impacted by the new economic realities facing all of higher education, and the new president will need the fiscal acumen that enables strong financial stewardship and achieves program enhancements with scarce resources. As aspirations are weighed against resources, the president will be asked to oversee the development of strategic operating budgets, consider creative academic business models, and evaluate appropriate parameters for fees and financial aid as a means of addressing issues of affordability and accessibility for future generations of Wooster families.
Empowering the Leadership Team
While financial management is important, there is also a need to continue to model, expect, and empower administrative effectiveness across all areas and to manage effectively Wooster’s key leadership personnel. Wooster benefits from a committed group of senior administrators who are loyal to the College and who effectively enhance the impact of Wooster’s mission. The new president can optimize her/his own effectiveness by coalescing the talent in this group and maintaining strong teamwork.

Optimizing Trustee Leadership
Members of Wooster’s Board of Trustees are deeply committed to the welfare of the College and continue to be impressively generous with their time, expertise, and resources. Working with the board chair, the new president will have an opportunity to enrich an effective partnership with the board, to integrate the board’s insights and expertise into the strategic planning effort, and to collaborate with board leadership.

With an ongoing opportunity to strengthen communication with the board, the president can help the entire Wooster community forge an enhanced understanding of best governance practices. The respect and trust that grow from transparent leadership, in a healthy climate of shared governance, will enable the new president to foster a mutual commitment to Wooster’s future, among and between the College’s constituencies.

Energizing Campus/Community Cooperation
The College of Wooster and the City of Wooster must work together in the development of the College, the town, and the surrounding region. Overall quality of community life, economic development, K-12 education, health care, available day care, and a lively cultural/arts/entertainment calendar are all sustainable ventures when the College and the community are intentional in their cooperative efforts. The president who becomes professionally and personally involved, and who works to enhance The College of Wooster’s partnership with the community, will strengthen the College’s stature as a citizen of Wayne County. http://wccvb.com/desktop/index.php & http://mainstreetwooster.org/
Desired Attributes for the New Wooster President

The new president should reflect many of the qualities that Wooster seeks to instill in its students. Intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, idealism, social responsibility, and personal engagement all help to define the expectations of the Wooster presidency. A professional reputation for setting high standards and personal characteristics of warmth, authenticity, integrity, and a sense of humor will also be important. Understanding of the academy is essential. The successful Wooster president will be:

- **A visionary leader**;
- **A person who values the life of the mind**, is passionate about the liberal arts, and will embrace a culture in which teaching, learning, and scholarship are of primary importance;
- **A strategic thinker and planner** who can build a shared vision, inspire all Wooster constituencies, and implement initiatives that will produce a robust future for Wooster;
- **A person of intercultural competence** and global perspective committed to diversity in its many forms, with demonstrated experience and confidence in galvanizing a campus culture that advocates, practices, and promotes engagement across diverse groups;
- **An accomplished communicator** who can effectively and consistently keep all Wooster stakeholders informed and engaged;
- **A gifted listener** who, as a result, will build genuine interpersonal relationships with ease;
- **An active collaborator**, prepared to engage the College community in thoughtful conversation and spirited discourse;
- **A person of transparency**, capable of building trust and harmonizing sometimes divergent views within a complex setting;
- **A person who will focus on student needs**, who will enjoy meaningful interaction with Wooster students, and who will enthusiastically participate in the life of the campus;
- **An energetic and effective fundraiser**, able to develop further the philanthropic culture at Wooster;
- **A person who will practice effective management** to enhance the core values of Wooster, while utilizing his/her financial acumen to balance institutional aspirations with available resources;
- **A student of higher education** who understands the major issues facing private colleges, including enrollment management, shared governance, marketing and branding, new educational technologies, and emerging financial models.
The Application Process

The Wooster Presidential Search Committee will be accepting nominations and evaluating applications on a rolling basis throughout the summer. The candidate pool will be narrowed in mid-September. Although applications will be accepted until a new president is selected, candidates should submit materials by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, September 22, 2015 for the most favorable consideration. The new president will be invited to begin work on or about July 1, 2016.

Dr. Thomas B. Courtice of AGB Search is assisting with this search. Nominators and prospective candidates may contact him at: tbc@agbsearch.com or 614/395-3229.

Application materials should be submitted to:
Ms. Mary Neagoy, Chair,
Presidential Search Committee
WoosterPres@agbsearch.com

Materials should include a letter of candidacy that responds to The Agenda for New Leadership, a CV or resume, and the names and contact information (phone and email) for three references, none of whom will be contacted until a later stage of the search and not without the formal permission of the candidate. All inquiries and applications will be received in full confidence.

The College values diversity, strives to attract qualified women and minority candidates, and encourages individuals belonging to these groups to apply. Wooster seeks to ensure diversity by its policy of making appointments without regard to age, sex, color, race, creed, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or political affiliation.

The College of Wooster is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.