The Board of Trustees and its Presidential Search Committee announce the search for the next president of Wabash College. After 13 years of impressive leadership and distinguished achievement, Dr. Andrew T. Ford will retire from the presidency at the conclusion of the 2005-06 academic year. His successor will find an uncommon opportunity to build on the strength and distinctiveness of this excellent liberal arts college for men.

AN INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1832 as an independent institution, Wabash College has consistently committed itself to liberal arts education and to the stated aims of its first faculty member, Caleb Mills. Mills advocated “learning, virtue, and service” in establishing the character of the College in its early years. Today, the College continues to convey its mission in a single sentence: Wabash College educates men to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely. Based on this mission, the College subscribes to five core values that guide Wabash people and programs in all that they do:

- A rigorous liberal arts education
- Personalized teaching and learning
- Individual responsibility and trust
- A socially, economically, and ethnically diverse student body
- A tradition and philosophy of independence

A DISTINCTIVE PROFILE

As a selective undergraduate college for men, Wabash offers an experience that is highly valued by current students and enthusiastically promoted by alumni. Approximately 850 men comprise the student body, representing 34 states and about two dozen foreign countries. Roughly 72% of Wabash men matriculate from Indiana. Between 15-20% of the student body are students of color. Diversity at Wabash is also described in socio-economic terms, highlighting the College’s strong commitment to an egalitarian culture in which each student is challenged on his own terms to achieve his full potential. This culture, which permeates both the student body and the wider community, is reinforced by the College’s admissions and financial aid strategies.

Teaching and nurturing the student body are outstanding faculty members (approximately 90), nearly all of whom hold a Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree in their field. Nearly one-half of the current faculty has come to Wabash in the last six years, enriching a group that traditionally has been intensely and intimately involved in the life of the College through excellent teaching, continued scholarship, hands on leadership, and regular interaction with students and each other. This community of scholars demands excellence in teaching and thrives
on frequent and open interaction, relationships across disciplines, and an atmosphere of mutual respect between students and faculty. The student:faculty ratio is currently 9.4:1, an important element that helps to define this rigorous liberal arts environment. A student cannot succeed at Wabash without an intense work ethic. Nevertheless, recent results from UCLA’s CIRP survey indicate that more than 86% of graduating seniors would “definitely” choose Wabash if starting over.

Challenging and creative intellectual work remain central to the Wabash student experience. Indeed, scores from the recent National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) help to illustrate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process at Wabash. NSSE has “benchmarked” college freshmen and seniors in five educational categories: 1) level of academic challenge; 2) student-faculty interactions; 3) supportive campus environment; 4) active and collaborative learning; and 5) enriching educational experiences. Compared to students at all other liberal arts colleges surveyed, first-year Wabash students scored at the 100th percentile on all five benchmarks, while Wabash seniors scored at the 100th percentile on the first three, and between the 90th and 100th percentile on the remaining two.

Student life on the campus is predominately residential and rich with co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Wabash men participate widely beyond the classroom in service organizations, fine arts performances, academic honoraries, and student clubs. Campus housing includes five residence halls and ten national fraternities. A strong Greek system remains a central component of residential life and many of the fraternity houses are undergoing significant renovation and/or reconstruction. Intercollegiate athletics are also an important part of the Wabash tradition, where the “Little Giants” compete through the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAA Division III) in 10 varsity sports. Nearly half of the student body competes at the varsity level and more than 80% are active in 25 intramural and four club sports. The ongoing celebration of tradition is important, and perhaps nowhere more significant than in the century-old Monon Bell Classic, a nationally acclaimed, small college football rivalry.

A DISTINCTIVE PROGRAM

Wabash offers 21 majors, a 3-3 program in law with Columbia University, and a 3-2 dual degree engineering program with Columbia and Washington universities. The curriculum creates common academic experiences for all students through the Freshman Tutorial, the year-long Cultures and Traditions course for sophomores, and the Senior Comprehensive Examinations. Wabash also prepares students to become citizens of the world through an extensive off-campus study program and numerous class immersion trips. In addition to the strength of the previously mentioned NSSE outcomes at Wabash, the College has consistently improved
its position in the *US News and World Report*’s top tier of national liberal arts colleges. Last year (2004) Wabash received additional favorable national ratings for faculty resources (10th); alumni giving (24th); and financial resources (13th). The value of the Wabash endowment is currently $330 million, placing it first in endowment-per-student among schools in the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) and in the top-30 colleges nationally.

Two specific examples, one time tested and the other quite new, help to underscore the distinctive nature of the Wabash profile.

Student life in the Wabash community is directed by a single-statement code of conduct known as **The Gentleman’s Rule**. The College expects each student to conduct himself, at all times, both on and off the campus, as a gentleman and responsible citizen. This simple yet all encompassing rule allows the Wabash man exceptional personal freedom and requires commensurate personal responsibility, both of which are essential parts of his educational development. No other student handbook or code of regulations exists, and generations of Wabash men take great pride in the effectiveness of supporting student growth and development in this manner.

Founded in 2000 with support from Lilly Endowment Inc., **The Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts** seeks to improve the effectiveness of a liberal arts education at Wabash College and beyond the campus boundaries. The Center’s mission is to explore, test, and promote liberal arts education, and to ensure that its nature and value are widely understood in an increasingly competitive higher education market. To date, the Center has focused on working with various networks of liberal arts colleges and universities, researchers, faculty members, administrators, and other organizations, all in an effort to gather evidence and to identify methods of assessing the short and longer-term impact of a liberal arts education. These activities have enabled Wabash to strengthen its growing reputation as a force in the national discussion on the future of the liberal arts.

**A DISTINCTIVE PLACE**

Less than an hour from Indianapolis and three hours from Chicago, Wabash College is located in Crawfordsville, an Indiana town of 15,000 people recognized as one of the “100 Best Small Towns in America.” In a stunning 60-acre wooded setting, the campus combines significant historic structures, tastefully expanded and smartly renovated academic buildings, such as Goodrich Hall (mathematics, computer sciences, and physics), and dramatic new state-of-the-art facilities, such as Hays Hall (biology and chemistry), the Malcolm X Institute for Black Studies, Trippet Hall (offering outstanding conference facilities), and the 170,000 square-foot Allen Athletics and Recreation Center.

The College is committed to keeping up with advances in information technology. More than 380 computers are available to students in labs and computer classrooms, and all residential study desks have Ethernet connections. Wireless networking access is available in the library, the science buildings, and the public areas of many other academic buildings. Wabash has a policy of maintenance, upgrading, and replacement of every classroom, faculty, and office computer every three years. Blackboard software is widely used in the academic program to manage class resources.
The Lilly Library, built in 1959, was renovated and expanded in 1992. Its holdings include more than 434,000 books and 5,530 serial subscriptions, and a media collection totaling over 11,000. The Library’s Media Center includes the latest technology for web page production, digital video editing, and a range of desktop publishing options, as well as excellent support to assist the faculty in their mission.

AN AGENDA FOR NEW LEADERSHIP

At a time in higher education when colleges aspire to gain a competitive advantage by enhancing their distinctive strengths, Wabash has succeeded in reinforcing its points of distinction. It has built vigorously on its unique profile as a small liberal arts college for men. The next president must be prepared, enthusiastically and energetically, to embrace the Wabash distinctions and to accept the challenging agenda for future enrichment. That agenda includes:

Championing the Liberal Arts – Although great strides have been made in strengthening the academic program and renewing the teaching faculty at Wabash, the College has a clear appetite for continuing to improve what it already does well. The new president must be confident and comfortable with the responsibility for articulating and implementing a vision of what Wabash as a first-rate residential liberal arts college should be, and for fostering a climate in which faculty are encouraged to innovate in order to maintain the strength and relevance of a Wabash education for the 21st century. In addition to providing the leadership necessary to enhance the Wabash experience as a model for teaching and learning in the liberal arts, the new president must be able to articulate, inside and outside the academy, the value of a liberal arts education as a keystone for leadership and service in a global society.

Communicating: Listening, Engaging, Responding – It is important that the campus discuss openly and understand clearly the key issues it faces as a distinctive college. The next president will be expected to communicate, both formally and informally, in a style that will openly engage all Wabash constituencies in meaningful discourse around important institutional topics. For example, many in the Wabash community are eager for introspective discussion on how best to prepare young men in an all-male environment for effective leadership in a diverse society; on how to reinforce and effectively sustain an unusually succinct student code of conduct; on how to best serve new generations of Wabash men with challenging and relevant curricular and co-curricular activities; or on how to face other specific issues raised by the College’s uniqueness. One person expressed it well: “This college needs to continually look at what it wants to be, while considering judiciously what it can be.” An important opportunity exists for a new president to strengthen Wabash by guiding it through this ongoing analysis and self-realization about the core strengths of its distinctive profile.
Supporting and Enriching the Campus Culture – Wabash is seeking energetic leadership from the new president. The combination of creative vision, strong management skills, organizational transparency, a consultative style that emphasizes consensus building, and an affirming interaction with campus constituents will help to set a collaborative tone in which the campus ethos will thrive. The new president will also provide leadership and vision in enhancing the nature and quality of residential student life.

Sustaining Enrollment Momentum – Motivating and monitoring enrollment management initiatives will continue to be in the long-term best interest of the College. As one of only three independent colleges for men in the country, Wabash operates from a position of strength with regard to its enrollment niche. That strength, however, must be sustained through effective programs in recruitment and retention that continue to benefit from presidential leadership and creativity, and from an ongoing commitment to market the unique features of the College. The new president will need to stay informed and sensitive to the enrollment patterns of male students throughout higher education and to the best means of reaching the marketplace. In recent years, Wabash alumni have become increasingly important as a resource for the College’s admissions program, to the extent that over 40% of prospective student referrals are now generated by Wabash graduates. As with so many areas of the College operation, the president will be the chief spokesperson for the College, insuring the proper presentation of the Wabash opportunity to gifted young men and their families.

Strategically Planning for the Future – Wabash successfully completed a five-year planning cycle in 2004 and extended several important strategic initiatives for the subsequent two years. The importance of bringing trustees, faculty, and other stakeholders to a consensus around ongoing strategic goals and initiatives in 2007 will remain critical. The clarity of the planning objectives for future accomplishment will be especially important in the following areas, among others: 1) diversity of students and faculty; 2) resources for educational and administrative programs; 3) career counseling and the creation of post-graduate opportunities; 4) awareness of curricular and pedagogical effectiveness; and 5) support for technological advancement. Wabash is not unique in its need to articulate a compelling roadmap for future achievements, but the clarity of the College mission and its core values demand ongoing attention to the ways in which Wabash will continue to deliver an educational experience that is of the highest quality possible and deliberately distinctive.

Developing New Resources – Although Wabash is a financially sound institution, the future calls for continued aggressive cultivation of new resources for the College. Exceeding an original $100 million Campaign for Leadership goal by $36 million and enjoying over 40% alumni participation in annual giving stand as affirming incentives for the next president’s active involvement in fundraising for the College. Strategic planning efforts will continue to prioritize future needs for endowment support. The College is already considering construction of a new campus center. The new president will be asked to extend the College’s overall achievements by overseeing the organization and implementation of major new philanthropic efforts.
Shaping the Future: Unique Opportunities – Very early in the president’s tenure, a new Dean of the College will be selected. The timing of this appointment will provide the new president with the opportunity to help shape the profile of the successful candidate, and to participate in the search and selection process. In addition, the president will have the opportunity to influence the direction and leverage the activity of the relatively young Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts, both to improve the Wabash educational program and to enhance the College’s influence and reputation at the national level. Finally, the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion already provides the College with international recognition and offers excellent future opportunities for enhancing learning environments in North American colleges, universities, and theological schools.

DESIRED ATTRIBUTES OF THE NEXT WABASH PRESIDENT

The next Wabash president will bring integrity in every aspect of his/her professional and personal life, a strong work ethic, high energy levels, a genuine sense of humor, and a warmly engaging personal manner. Beyond this, other specific talents, skills, and experiences will be critical. The successful Wabash president will be:

• An advocate for the liberal arts and the academy, and a person committed to fostering and supporting rigorous academic programs and a gifted faculty;

• A person experienced in a setting where effective teaching and learning are highly valued;

• A person who will engage the Wabash community in critical and thoughtful conversation, and who enjoys a lively intellectual life;

• A consensus builder, committed to collaboration, yet able to make prudent and timely executive decisions;

• A visionary and visible leader who actively and enthusiastically participates in the life of the campus and the community;

• A person who will focus on student needs and thrive on meaningful interaction with students;

• A strategic thinker, with a proven ability to implement workable plans to achieve desired outcomes;

• An effective fundraiser, eager to develop and nurture off-campus relationships, particularly with Wabash alumni;

• A person who thoughtfully embraces tradition and who can clearly articulate and enhance the value and relevance of a college for men.
THE PROCESS OF CANDIDACY

The Presidential Search Committee will begin to review candidate materials in mid-September and applications will be received until the position is filled. The new president will assume office on or about July 1, 2006.

Dr. Thomas B. Courtice of Academic Search Consultation Service, Washington, DC, is assisting with the search. Nominators or prospective candidates may contact him at Tom.Courtice@academic-search.org or by phoning (614) 405-9209. Applications will include a letter of candidacy responding to the desired attributes for leadership, a resume, and the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of five references, all of which will be received in full confidence.

All applications should be submitted electronically to: Wabash@academic-search.org