Wabash College announces the search for the next Chief Academic Officer, who holds the title Dean of the College. Working with the College’s first new President in 13 years, the Dean will play a pivotal role as Wabash pursues an uncommon opportunity to build on its strengths and distinctiveness as a preeminent 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 70% of Wabash men matriculate from Indiana. Between 15 and 20% of the student body are students of color, the highest percentage among our peer institutions. Socio-economic diversity is also prized at Wabash, 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, which include meeting 100% of the demonstrated need for all students.

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 9.7:1, 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 college student 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 and scores from the recent National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) help to illustrate the effectiveness of the teaching/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 10 national fraternities, which underpin the academic, service, and social aspects of campus life. Several of the fraternity houses are currently undergoing extensive renovation 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 consistently has been ranked in U.S. News &
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-sentence 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 of 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 various 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 upgrading and replacing 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.

The College hosts the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, which is also funded by the Lilly Endowment Inc. Faculty members from colleges and universities throughout the nation come here during the summer to discuss strategies to improve their teaching. As its impact is felt throughout higher education, this Center will enhance learning environments in colleges, universities, and theological schools everywhere.

THE ROLE OF THE NEW DEAN

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 Dean, working with the new President, will have the all-too-rare opportunity in American higher education to grow a well-funded, solidly administered, clearly focused, enthusiastically supported, and highly ranked private liberal arts college. From this vantage point, the Dean will need to address several immediate needs:

Guide a Talented Faculty. A vigorous advocate for the faculty, the Dean will shape and guide a highly motivated community of scholars where newcomers and veterans bring unique assets to the classroom and the laboratory. The Dean will nurture new faculty and mentor them through the tenure review process; consider various strategies to enhance pre-tenure scholarship, teaching, and creative work; support the continued development of senior faculty; and encourage the leadership required for effective faculty governance.

Complete the Academic Program Review. The College has begun a comprehensive review of the academic program, which the new Dean will see through to completion and implementation. This ambitious review seeks to balance stability with change and tradition with innovation, with the aim of ensuring that the Wabash curriculum provides students with the tools needed to succeed in a highly technological, diverse, and global society.

Broaden the Experience. The incoming Dean will lead the academic community as it works toward enhancing, in the broadest sense, the richness and diversity of the Wabash liberal arts education, from the backgrounds and experiences of the students, faculty, and staff who make up the learning community to the curricular and co-curricular programs of the College. The Dean will need to sustain opportunities for international study, class immersion trips, and internships as well as the research and scholarly work of the recently expanded Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies.

Working toward these ends, the Dean is supported by academic Division and Department chairs, the Head Librarian, the Registrar, the Director of Information Technology Services, and the Director of the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts among others. This organizational chart may change as the new Dean and President determine how best to array the institution’s resources to achieve its mission.
ATTRIBUTES OF LEADERSHIP

The next Dean will be charged with leading a talented and productive faculty and staff through this extraordinary time in the history of Wabash College. Committed to working positively with the new President, faculty, and staff, the successful candidate will bring to the college a set of qualifications and strengths that include:

• Earned terminal degree in a liberal arts field and a record of teaching, scholarship and service appropriate for tenure at Wabash;
• Intimate knowledge of the life and work of a residential liberal arts environment;
• Demonstrated ability to successfully perform required administrative functions such as recruitment and hiring, review of tenure and promotion, budgeting and resource allocation;
• Excellent listening, oral, and written communication skills needed to communicate in a manner that is timely, open and effective to diverse groups, both large and small;
• Respect and understanding of the role of technology in higher education today;
• Collegial nature coupled with the willingness to consult widely, actively cultivate openness, and value differences of all kinds;
• Appreciation for and enjoyment of the full life of the College and its community;
• An art for cultivating creativity and imagination as well as a proven ability to build and lead teams;
• The confidence and energy to respond positively to a complex work load, delegate effectively, and forge decision-making in a way that is both collegial and decisive.

SELECTION PROCESS

The Search Committee will begin reviewing candidate resumes in January 2006 with initial interviews commencing in early February. Applications/nominations will be accepted until the Deanship is filled. Inquiries, nominations, and applications will be received and considered in confidence. Applications will include a letter of interest that reflects on the desired attributes, a resume, and the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of five references.

Materials should be electronically submitted to: Wabashcao@academic-search.org

The search is being assisted by:
John B. Hicks, Senior Consultant, Academic Search Consultation Service, Washington D.C.
john.hicks@academic-search.org or 205-345-7221.

Wabash College encourages applications from minority group members and women and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.