

THE SEARCH FOR A PROVOST WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY

The Board of Directors, President, and Provost Search Committee of Wittenberg University invite nominations for and expressions of interest in the position of Provost. The position becomes available as Dr. Kenneth W. Bladh leaves the position after nine years of dedicated service. As the following profile will indicate, this will be an exceptional opportunity for academic and administrative leadership and the search committee is eager to attract persons excited by its significant potential. The position becomes available on or about July 1, 2010.

THE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1845 and affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Wittenberg University is recognized as one of nation's leading liberal arts colleges. Located in Springfield, Ohio, a community of 62,000 residents, Wittenberg is one of only 280 Phi Beta Kappa institutions in the United States. With a stimulating academic environment that includes more than 50 majors and unique programs, a strong tradition of excellence in international and interdisciplinary studies, and a diversity of experiential learning opportunities, Wittenberg annually transforms the lives of its 1,900 students.

The success of its graduates demonstrates the powerful impact of the learning experience. Since 1996, 13 students have been awarded prestigious Fulbright Scholarships. Also, Wittenberg ranks among the top 10 percent of private liberal arts colleges nationwide whose graduates go on to earn a Ph.D. Historically, about 25 percent of Wittenberg students enter graduate school immediately following graduation, with 70 percent eventually pursuing advanced degrees. Other distinguishing characteristics include 12 Fulbright scholars on the faculty, and the number of Ohio Professors of the Year is more than any other four-year college in the state. Recently, the Princeton Review recognized Wittenberg as a top 20 school nationally in the categories of beautiful campus, everyone plays intramurals, and most importantly, "professors get high marks." According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Wittenberg students in both first-year and Senior cohorts reported consistently higher scores in levels of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment than their Great Lakes Private, Carnegie Class, and NSSE peers.

In keeping with its motto "Having light we pass it on to others," Wittenberg also empowers students to find their unique passion through numerous collaborative research opportunities, a strong commitment to global engagement, and a passion for service both

locally and abroad. One of only a handful of colleges in the country to include community service as a graduation requirement, Wittenberg regularly offers service-learning courses that connect academic material with meaningful experiences in the greater Springfield community.

The desire to help students find meaning in all that they do clearly ties with the university's mission to "provide a liberal arts education dedicated to intellectual inquiry and wholeness of person within a diverse residential community." At the same time, Wittenberg's mission reflects its Lutheran heritage in that it "challenges students to become responsible global citizens, to discover their callings, and to lead personal, professional, and civic lives of creativity, service, compassion, and integrity." While at Wittenberg, students embody this mission through many facets of their education. Upon graduation, many of these same people continue to actualize the mission through their involvement in the Peace Corps, Teach for America, Americorps, and other opportunities that appeal to their desire to give back and engage in journeys of discovery. In these and other ways, Wittenberg students attest to the university's aim to not only prepare them to make a living, but also a life.

Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCACS), Wittenberg also has specific programs accredited by the American Chemical Society (ACS), the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). Wittenberg's student-faculty ratio is approximately 12:1, with 44 percent male and 56 percent female. Students from 40 states and 26 nations call Wittenberg home. As a member of the North Coast Athletic Conference, the university has one of the most successful athletic traditions in NCAA Division III. Wittenberg's annual operating budget is approximately \$60M. Endowment funds as of December 31, 2009 totaled \$91M.

LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES

In preparation for the provost search, the Faculty Executive Board, with the assistance of counsel, sponsored two days of conversations on January 18-19, 2010, in an effort to define the primary opportunities and challenges for which the next provost will provide leadership. These sessions included all appropriate constituents of the university: administrators, faculty, students, support staff, and trustees. The agendas that evolved should help nominators and prospective candidates understand the standards by which candidacy will be measured.

Initially, it is appropriate to place this professional opportunity in context and perspective. From the outset it can be stated unequivocally that this position has the potential to be one of the most exciting and rewarding currently available in American higher education. The Wittenberg community is eager for strong and confident academic leadership. The provost is viewed as, and is in fact, second in command in the

administrative structure of the university and would come to join a strong leadership team as “first among equals.” With an impending major capital campaign and the demand for the president to be increasingly engaged with off-campus constituents, and an emerging academic agenda, there is a major need for the person filling the provost’s role to have unusually strong leadership and management skills. Understandably, by style and action, the initial months of appointment will be spent developing the trust of the campus community. This will be accomplished by asserting confident and effective collaborative leadership of and for the academic program. Many within the university utilize the word “voice” to exemplify that leadership – “a better voiced opinion for academics,” “an independent strong voice at the top,” as well as “an active advocate for academic priorities.” The excitement of this position is the fact that it provides an uncommon opportunity for both academic and institutional leadership. Like many institutions of higher education – both private and public – Wittenberg faces the challenges of an uncertain economy and changing demographics. Throughout its 165 year history the university has built and maintained an exceptional reputation, both regionally and nationally. Over that period, Wittenberg has been confronted with challenges and has responded in a positive and transformative way. The challenges of 2010 are yet another chapter, and, like those which have preceded it, will be resolved by effective leadership. Therein lies the exceptional potential for this opportunity.

With the context established, we believe it helpful to articulate some of the specific items that await our next provost. The items are listed alphabetically for ease of reference and therefore are not necessarily in order of import.

Academic Program: Founded on a strong liberal arts tradition, Wittenberg has made exciting progress through the implementation of its strategic plan. Among new programs are majors in International Studies and Financial Economics, a minor in Computational Science, as well as several others. In addition, the university has begun a new program in Entrepreneurship as well as establishing three new innovative institutes and centers: The Center for Civic and Urban Engagement, The East Asian Institute, and the Screenwriters Institute. Additional plans are underway to revise the core curriculum and to review the broad array of current academic offerings. The recent appointment of a faculty ad-hoc committee, whose assignment is a thorough and far-reaching review of all curricular offerings, is an indication of the seriousness of intent with which the university plans to address its academic future. Reflecting the priorities of the strategic plan, the effort will review the relevance of present curricular offerings with a focus on increasing international, experiential, and interdisciplinary learning opportunities for our students. The committee’s findings will help to inform the work of the new provost to provide leadership for creating a compelling academic vision for a 21st century liberal arts university. Most important, there is a strong commitment that whatever changes may occur, they will do so within the mission and traditions of Wittenberg.

Communication: Meaningful communication between the various constituents of the university is extremely important. Wittenberg is committed to a shared governance model and has numerous committee structures that actively engage the faculty in major decisions of the university. Not surprisingly, the pressures exerted by recent national

social and fiscal challenges have placed a strain on the Wittenberg community, prompting increasing emphasis on transparency and a culture of engagement as fundamental to the future for which the university aspires. In that regard, the provost will play an important role in establishing an environment in which more effective communication within and beyond the academic realm becomes the norm.

Definition: In the increasingly competitive national landscape of liberal arts colleges, Wittenberg is challenged to identify its distinctive characteristics and provide a compelling answer to the question “Why Wittenberg?” Wittenberg’s recognized reputation of blending liberal arts and pre-professional programs, emphasis on service, and rich athletic traditions provide part of the answer. But more needs to be done to define Wittenberg’s distinctive appeal. The new provost will play a key role in shaping the answer to this question.

Enrollment and Retention: Like a number of institutions in the Midwest, Wittenberg has experienced some enrollment loss over the past several years, e.g. an average of about one percent per year over the last five years. A challenge facing the university is a determination of new or revised offerings that will attract an increasing number of students and help stabilize enrollment. Added to the equation are increased efforts to improve retention, including the development of a new First Year Experience program and Summer College. While some of these programmatic elements do not fall within the provost’s area of responsibility, there is a strong expectation that he/she will work cooperatively with other university officers in the enactment of strategies that will achieve consistently optimal enrollments.

Nurturing the Student Experience: The motto of the university is “Having light, we pass it on to others.” And what is light? Energy made visible. That visible energy begins within the classroom, but it continues in a multitude of student activities and organizations – academic (both departmental and national honoraries), media, political, recreational, religious, social awareness, social service, student government, and fraternities and sororities. The various athletic programs of the university are well regarded with at least 40% of the student body participating in intercollegiate athletics and an equal percentage involved in club or intramural sports. The lines between curriculum and co-curriculum at Wittenberg are purposefully not always well delineated. Wittenberg seeks to educate the whole person. A good example is the fact that intercollegiate athletics report to the provost. It will be important for our provost to be comfortable with and committed to this very special blending of experiences.

Organization: The scope and reach of the provost’s area is broad, including many student support functions. There is wide agreement that the organizational structure within the provost’s office may not be as effective as it could be. Currently 13 areas report to the provost. Thus an early task of the new provost will be a complete assessment of reporting relationships and a revision to achieve greater efficiencies. Beyond the organizational structure of the provost’s office, concern has been expressed that the faculty committee system may also require review, indicating that the provost

and Faculty Executive Board will wish to work cooperatively in developing alternative options for full faculty consideration.

Regional Accreditation: The university experienced its last decennial North Central visit in 2007 and overall received highly favorable ratings. One area of concern however, requiring a progress report in December 2010, was that of student assessment. The university is making concerted efforts to improve assessment standards, and while the final report to the accrediting agency will occur only a few months after the new provost takes office, he/she will wish to place continuing emphasis on this important area.

Strategic Plan: The university adopted its current strategic plan, *Distinctively Wittenberg: A Vision of Excellence*, in the Spring of 2006, following the arrival of President Mark Erickson. The planning process had begun several years earlier and included the broad engagement of the campus community. The plan provides a blueprint for Wittenberg's future and includes seven goals targeting academic programs, student recruitment, the student experience, diversity, investment in faculty and staff, cultivation of the Wittenberg community, and facilities. There is a general belief that these seven goals are central to the institution's future. It will be important for the provost to exert strong leadership in carrying the academic agenda forward, for its success will do much to ensure the university's long term health and vitality.

LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

The agendas noted above call for certain talents, skills, and experiences that will enable continuing growth and development of Wittenberg University. The search committee seeks an individual who will:

- Articulate, embrace, and exemplify the values of a liberal arts education and the Wittenberg mission, providing confident and assertive leadership for the academic programs of the university;
- Bring to the position a notable record of classroom teaching experience and acknowledged scholarship commensurate with that of a senior faculty member;
- Foster a healthy collegial environment among faculty, staff, and students by providing inspirational leadership, effective communication, and a commitment to diversity and justice;
- Demonstrate effective leadership, management, and administrative skills; and,
- Promote the university's strategic plan in a manner that cultivates consensus around curricular innovation.

THE PROCESS OF CANDIDACY

Nominations and expressions of interest may be submitted electronically to:

Jerry G. Pankhurst, Ph.D., Chair
Provost Search Committee
Wittenberg University
wittenberg@academic-search.com

Candidates are asked to submit electronically a letter of interest that reflect on the leadership characteristics noted above, a resume, and the names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of five references. Provided references will not be contacted without first securing the permission of the candidate.

Drs. Bruce T. Alton and Thomas B. Courtice of Academic Search, Inc., Washington, D.C., are assisting with the search. Interested candidates or nominators may contact Dr. Alton at (202) 262-8250, or bta@academic-search.com.

Wittenberg is committed to attracting and retaining highly qualified individuals who collectively reflect the diversity of our student body and society at-large. We believe it is educationally imperative to further our students' appreciation and understanding of a culturally diverse society, and we are committed to ensuring a diverse environment for all individuals, regardless of race, gender, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, or disability. In that spirit, we are especially interested in receiving applications from individuals who would contribute to the diversity of our community.

Learn more about Wittenberg by visiting our homepage at www.wittenberg.edu.