Search for a President

The Board of Trustees announces the search for the 11th president of Carleton College and invites nominations and expressions of interest in this distinctive opportunity for engaged leadership. Carleton’s next president will accept responsibility for an exceptional liberal arts college with accomplishments that have been influenced by a distinguished lineage of presidential predecessors. Carleton’s current president, Robert A. Oden Jr., has added to the substance of these accomplishments, and his eight-year tenure strengthens the platform of significant achievement from which the College’s next president will be expected to exercise creative and vigorous leadership. Mr. Oden has announced his retirement from the presidency at the conclusion of the current academic year (2009–2010).

At a moment when difficult economic realities are testing the agility of all higher education institutions, Carleton College continues to offer a clear message of confidence based on a solid institutional self-understanding and a wide array of energetic initiatives for current and future consideration. Taken together, these qualities provide uncommon strength upon which the next generation of presidential leadership can build.

AN INTRODUCTION TO CARLETON

Founded as a preparatory school in 1866 and reorganized as a college four years later, Carleton College is one of the premier residential liberal arts colleges in the United States, set apart by a steady resolve to provide an undergraduate liberal arts education of the highest quality. The College teaches students to read perceptively, to write and speak clearly, and to think analytically, while striving to instill in them a sense of curiosity and intellectual adventure, an awareness of method and purpose in a variety of fields, and a commitment to quality and integrity.

At Carleton, students share a passion for intellectual inquiry and an eagerness to experience the joy of learning. Faculty members respond with a primary attention to teaching, but with a clear understanding that active engagement in their own academic field is essential to nurturing their intellectual vitality and their abilities to inspire high quality students. At Carleton, students and faculty members work together in a process of discovery, creating an environment of intellectual collaboration and individual growth.

While assessment of educational outcomes continues to be an active focus of attention at Carleton, existing indicators of the College’s success are many:

- According to the most recent data available (2006), Carleton ranks third among all liberal arts colleges in the number of graduates who earned doctorates in all fields over the preceding 40 years.
- The College ranks first overall among liberal arts colleges for graduates receiving PhDs in the physical sciences and geosciences, third in life sciences and business and management, and fourth in social sciences.
- In recent years, about 79 percent of all Carleton graduates pursued an advanced degree, most within five years of graduation.
- From 2000 to 2009, Carleton graduates won 43 Fulbright, 12 Watson, 39 NSF, 9 Kresge Science, 9 NCAA Postgraduate, 1 Rhodes, and 1 Howard Hughes Medical Institute fellowships.
- Carleton had 772 National Merit Scholars in the entering classes from 2000 to 2008, ranking among the top 25 colleges and universities, and the highest total for any liberal arts college.

However impressive these considerable achievements may be, Carleton’s ethos continues to reflect a refreshing lack of pretense, as the campus community focuses on the daily endeavor of developing young minds and engaged students.
Carleton is located just 40 miles south of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, in Northfield, a charming small town (pop. 17,000) with considerable pride in the national reputation and the international perspective its residential colleges (Carleton and St. Olaf College) have provided for it. The stunning 1,040-acre residential campus includes an 880-acre arboretum, two lakes, and 45 campus buildings, many of which reflect Carleton’s rich historic heritage. At the same time, the College boasts many modern facilities, the most recent of which are two new residence halls, Cassat and Memorial, designed to house 230 students. Notable is the sustainability of these new halls, designed to provide student-supported environmental friendliness in the interest of reducing the carbon footprint of the Carleton campus. Both halls received a LEED gold rating. Carleton’s 1.65 megawatt wind turbine began operating in fall 2004, the first utility-grade wind turbine in the country to be owned by a college, and in 2008, the College was recognized by Forbes magazine as one of the 10 greenest colleges and universities in the country.

Total enrollment at Carleton is slightly more than 1,900 students. Of the 528 students in this year’s entering class, nine percent are first-generation college students, 22 percent are African American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino/Chicano, or Native American, and nine percent are from countries outside the United States. Students come to Carleton this year from 44 states, the District of Columbia, and 17 countries. Seventy-eight percent of those who were ranked graduated in the top tenth of their high school class. Carleton students are high achieving, diverse, talented, creative, open-minded, idealistic, and loathe to be typecast. They tend to compete against their own high standards, rather than against one another.

A close-knit educational environment supports the bond between faculty members and students. Carleton’s faculty members are uncommonly devoted to their teaching and mentoring relationships with students, and student input for formal faculty reviews is given serious weight. Faculty members also are accomplished scholars, researchers, and practitioners in their respective fields, gaining widespread national and international recognition for their scholarly work. With 217 full-time faculty members and 21 part-time, the student-to-faculty ratio is 9:1 and the average class size is 17 (35 percent of classes have 13 or fewer students). Each year students can choose from 1,000 courses in 39 majors and 16 concentrations and interdisciplinary programs. Students also benefit from significant off-campus learning opportunities, including approximately 20 Carleton-sponsored programs. Of recent graduates, 68 percent report an off-campus experience for credit at least once during their undergraduate years.

Carleton is distinguished from other high quality liberal arts colleges by a unique ethos of mutual respect among administrators, faculty and staff members, and students, based on a common agreement about the College’s mission. The Carleton community has a strong tradition of shared governance, with students and faculty and staff members serving with administrators on most committees; College Council includes alumni and trustee representatives as well. This fosters a sense of mutual responsibility for the life of the College. The traditionally high level of transparency of decision-making is highly valued on campus. The College also has worked to foster cordial relations with the neighborhood and the city; students and staff members participate in a number of volunteer activities in town, and the current academic civic engagement initiative has fostered more service learning opportunities in the larger community.
Academic discovery lies at the heart of the Carleton experience. Questions and curiosity drive learning at Carleton, and immersion in a rigorous liberal arts curriculum provides students with a broad understanding of the world, while their knowledge of a particular discipline is deepened through independent research, collaboration with faculty members, off-campus study, and a senior integrative exercise in the major. Within the context of this program, several recent developments define Carleton’s efforts at ongoing qualitative improvement:

- **Reducing the teaching load:** With the addition of 15 new faculty positions, even in the face of challenging economic times, Carleton is intentionally reducing the overall teaching load from six to five courses per year. While some steps remain for full achievement, the College will complete this initiative in the next two years.

- **Strengthening the arts:** This undertaking to enhance Carleton’s program in the arts is still under way. With the acquisition of Northfield’s former middle school building (located near the campus), the potential for creating the Arts Union, a new space in support of the arts, has been launched. Future decisions will better define the scope and the style of this initiative.

- **New majors:** Previously offered as academic concentrations, environmental studies and cinema and media studies are now majors.

- **Enhancing the curriculum:** Carleton has recently completed the successful redesign of its curriculum and graduation requirements, effective for the Class of 2014. Based on a new “Argument and Inquiry” first-year seminar and a Curricular Exploration and Intellectual Engagement requirement, the new graduation requirements include expanded student experiences in writing, quantitative reasoning, and global understanding.

- **Globalization:** The historic international emphasis in Carleton’s program has been enhanced by increased numbers of international faculty members (22 added in the last 10 years), international student enrollment (from 33 to 142 in the last 10 years), growing off-campus study opportunities, the further enrichment of Hebrew, and the addition of Arabic, bringing to 10 the number of languages offered for study on campus.

- **Visualizing the Liberal Arts:** With Mellon Foundation support, Carleton’s faculty members are working across disciplines in the refinement of visual approaches to teaching and learning, addressing the challenges experienced in the creation and use of images, media, maps, and other visual models.

- **Humanities Center:** Established in 2008 to provide a locus for innovative research and interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty members and students, the Humanities Center hosts faculty seminars, fosters and coordinates programming on campus, and supports student and faculty research in the humanities.

- **Outside support:** Carleton faculty continue to be successful in garnering outside support for academic initiatives and individual scholarship in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts. The last decade alone has seen nearly $6M of NSF and NIH funding for faculty research and other endeavors.
Carleton follows a trimester calendar in which students normally take three six-credit courses in each of three 10-week terms. They also are actively engaged in learning opportunities in independent research projects, the performing arts, community service, off-campus study, and a wide range of extracurricular activities through more than 100 student organizations. Students participate in eight intramural and 19 club sports, and an NCAA Division III athletic program with 10 sports for men and 11 for women. Nearly 90 percent of students are involved in club, intramural, or varsity sports.

The Laurence McKinley Gould Library has one of the best liberal arts college collections in the nation with 486,000 books, more than 1,600 journal subscriptions, 4,802 rare books, more than 400,000 government documents, more than 14,000 electronic journals, and digital access to hundreds of bibliographic databases.

Carleton’s campus network provides both wired and wireless access and has high-bandwidth connections to both the commodity Internet and Internet2. The College has a rich installation of public computer labs, technology classrooms, and departmental computing resources. Information systems serve academic and administrative needs, and are a best-of-breed mix of open-source and commercial applications. All campus servers reside in a new data center, and the application of technology to learning, teaching, and living is widespread. Carleton information technology is poised to serve the emerging revised curriculum and the growing emphasis on visualization.

The fabric of Carleton’s community extends well beyond campus boundaries and reflects college-wide characteristics of creativity and responsibility. Vigorous activity beyond the undergraduate years exists throughout the Carleton alumni body, a worldwide network with more than 25,000 members. More than 1,000 volunteers find ways in which to support their continuing belief in and commitment to the College, and more than 2,000 alumni and guests return to campus each year for alumni reunions. The Carleton Alumni Council consists of 25 active directors who serve as the voice of the larger alumni body.

Carleton annually ranks at the top of the list among all colleges and universities for alumni giving. An annual fund giving rate that generates more than 60 percent participation from within the alumni body is supplemented by the involvement of many parents and friends. Current annual giving totals $7.1 million and helps to anchor a $300 million capital fund drive, Breaking Barriers, Creating Connections: The Campaign for Carleton, scheduled for completion at the end of the current year.

Carleton’s Board of Trustees has a capacity for 48 voting members, the largest percentage being Carleton alumni. Trustees can be elected for two successive four-year terms of service and may be considered for reelection to additional terms after taking a year’s leave. The board is engaged, spirited, and highly effective in its support of Carleton’s people and programs, and the members are accessible to all Carleton constituencies, particularly during the times of their on-campus meetings. Much of their work is accomplished through a well-organized and extensive committee system, although they also work effectively when in session as a full board. The new president will play an integral role in sustaining the involvement of all external groups and in actively nurturing her or his relationship with the Board of Trustees.

Additional information about Carleton College may be found at www.carleton.edu.
Carleton’s next president must be an inspirational advocate for the value of the liberal arts in the development of future global leaders. Beyond this, several specific items are prominent on the new president’s leadership agenda.

**Sustaining the Carleton Community**
The people of Carleton will look to a new president’s presence and manner to sustain the distinctive sense of community that the campus has long valued. The new leader’s skills must include an ability to engage the campus on a genuine basis, to listen with care, and to respond to campus issues with thoughtful involvement. Presidential decision-making will best be exercised when the value of the College’s human resources are understood, honored, and maximized. Carleton’s campus ethos is most sharply in focus when efforts at full transparency are prominent in the day-to-day life of the College. To the extent that the president can delegate effectively by mentoring and empowering other senior administrators with similar attributes, the leadership team as a whole will continue to strengthen Carleton’s sense of community.

**Articulating a Strategic Vision**
Carleton’s creative energy frequently generates new ideas and fresh initiatives, many of which merit timely review and adoption. At the same time, finite financial and human resources will likely necessitate setting priorities among these initiatives when considering their future implementation. It will be critical that a new president is comfortable leading the campus in open discourse about Carleton’s several aspirations and determining those initiatives that rank highest in order of accomplishment. The new president will have an exciting opportunity to discuss critical and occasionally competing issues, to build on the College’s strengths, to set strategic priorities, and to develop a plan for future achievement. The resulting strategic vision will be strongest when it reflects an inclusive planning process and represents the integration of Carleton’s many strong “moving parts.”
Enhancing Carleton’s Philanthropic Culture
There is widespread consensus about the need to continue growing the College’s resource base and to ask the president to serve successfully as Carleton’s chief fundraiser. In no other area will the president’s ability to interpret the value of a Carleton education be more critical. Whether nurturing the prospects for major and planned gifts, further encouraging the levels of participation in the annual fund, or initiating the next capital campaign, the president will be asked to have a direct impact on fundraising and enhance Carleton’s philanthropic culture. Engaging external constituencies, setting development expectations, and establishing priorities on which future fundraising will be based are all opportunities awaiting the next president.

Maintaining Financial Equilibrium
Carleton has received longstanding recognition for sustaining a superior educational program with relatively fewer financial resources than most colleges in its peer group. The College’s current endowment totals approximately $550 million. With the new economic realities that are affecting all of higher education, Carleton’s president will need fiscal acumen that enables strong financial stewardship across all areas of the program. As aspirations are weighed against resources, the president will be asked to oversee the development of reliable operating budgets, maintain effective management philosophies for the endowment, consider creative academic business models, and evaluate appropriate limits for the fee structures and financial aid that the next generation of students and families will encounter. While strong trustee and administrative support is available in these areas, the president must be both comfortable and conversant with managing this area of the College program.

Championing Diversity and Internationalization
This undertaking is a multifaceted opportunity for new presidential leadership. The dramatic growth of the international student population over the last decade has underscored the integral nature of diversity as a core value in Carleton’s educational experience. Sustaining these international initiatives, while furthering efforts to build domestic multicultural student and faculty presence in the campus community, will provide an important objective in Carleton’s plans for the future. In addition, Carleton is committed to gaining additional insights about ways in which underrepresented groups, based on socioeconomic status, race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, will feel fully engaged as members of the Carleton family. As a part of strategic planning discussions, the new president will have a clarion opportunity to foster campus sensitivity around issues of diversity, while strengthening the programs that actually build diversity in the faculty, staff, and student body.

Distinguishing Carleton
New leadership at Carleton has an opportunity to build on existing strengths and create a preeminent educational profile that will further distinguish the College among leading private liberal arts colleges. The new president will be encouraged to imagine progressive developments at Carleton that would also set new standards of excellence for all of higher education. Such developments could include but not be limited to the implementation of the President’s Climate Commitment, globalization of the college experience, application of new technologies to the liberal arts, consideration of experimental pedagogies for future generations of learners, the appropriateness of expanded academic civic engagement, and/or public policy formulation in support of private higher education. When raised nationally, Carleton’s voice and institutional position on cutting-edge issues can provide leadership for all of higher education.
It would not be inaccurate to suggest that the attribute list for the next president should reflect many of the qualities that Carleton seeks in its students. Creativity, intellectual curiosity, idealism, social responsibility, and engagement all help to define the expectations of the presidency and the Carleton student body. A professional reputation for setting high standards and personal characteristics of warmth, authenticity, integrity, and a sense of humor also will be important. In addition, other specific characteristics and experiences are critical. The successful Carleton president will be:

- a passionate advocate for the liberal arts and the academy, experienced in a setting where teaching and learning are highly valued,
- a self-confident and visionary leader, who will enjoy relating to the wide variety of personal and professional interests expressed on the campus and in the community,
- an accomplished communicator and collaborator, prepared to actively engage the entire Carleton community in thoughtful conversation and spirited discourse,
- a strategic thinker who values the creative process, who can lead by ideas, and who is committed to collaboration as a means of articulating priorities and implementing plans,
- an effective fund-raiser, able to inspire the philanthropic culture at Carleton by further developing and nurturing off-campus relationships, particularly with Carleton alumni,
- a person of financial acumen, who will apply her or his management skills to enhance the core values of Carleton,
- a person of intercultural competence and global perspective, committed to diversity in its many forms and comfortable in celebrating and promoting it,
- a person who can focus on student needs, who will thrive on meaningful interaction with Carleton students, and who will enthusiastically participate in the life of the campus,
- a person who will celebrate and support the varying disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching and scholarly needs and accomplishments of this diverse faculty,
- a person of sophisticated intuition, capable of implementing appropriate change by building trust and harmonizing sometimes divergent views within a complex setting,
- a student of higher education, knowledgeable about key issues facing private colleges including governance, sustainability, diversity, new technologies, financial oversight, and best academic and administrative practices.
THE PROCESS OF APPLICATION

The Carleton search committee will be reviewing application materials on a rolling basis throughout the month of January and will begin to evaluate the candidate pool early in February. Although application materials will be accepted until the time that a new president is selected, candidates should submit materials by January 27 for the most favorable consideration. The new president is expected to begin work on or about July 1, 2010.

Thomas B. Courtice of Academic Search, Inc. is assisting with this search. Nominators or prospective candidates may contact him at tom.courtice@academic-search.com or 614-405-9209. Applications should include a letter of candidacy that responds to the opportunities for leadership at Carleton and the desired attributes for a new president, a complete CV or résumé, and the names and contact information (phone and e-mail) of three references, none of whom will be contacted without the formal permission of the candidate.

All applications will be received and considered in full confidence and should be submitted to CarletonPres@academic-search.com.

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