The Search for the Dean of APEX  
*(Advising, Planning, Experiential Learning)*

The College of Wooster announces its search for a creative and influential new academic officer, the Dean of APEX. The Dean will have the opportunity to lead a program that integrates academic and professional mentoring. This support is provided for students from the beginning of their Wooster careers through to their post-graduate lives. The Dean will report to the Provost and will assume a distinctive and cutting-edge role in support of Wooster's liberal arts program.

**The APEX Mission**

*The Mission of APEX is to encourage students to become passionately engaged in their education and to empower them to make informed, intentional choices about academic, professional, and personal opportunities.*

*The cultivation of self-reflective and intentional learning will help students throughout their four years at Wooster and prepare them to be lifelong learners and responsible global citizens.*

APEX is a dynamic hub that invites all Wooster students to integrate their classroom experiences with experiential learning, scholarship, and career path planning. In so doing, student satisfaction both during and beyond their undergraduate experiences is significantly increased.

https://www.wooster.edu/academics/apex/

Through the successful Dean's leadership, the work of the APEX professional team, and a continued affirming response from the Wooster community, APEX is uniquely positioned to enhance the overall value proposition of undergraduate liberal education at The College of Wooster.
Long known as a top national liberal arts college, The College of Wooster has distinguished itself by making Independent Study (I.S.) the cornerstone and inspiration of its undergraduate curriculum for nearly 70 years. As a “signature work for all students,” I.S. has historically and consistently been a rigorous, in-depth, year-long experience of inquiry or creative expression.

By working in partnership with a faculty member to conceive, organize, and complete research on a topic of the student’s choosing, every Wooster student develops abilities valued by employers and graduate schools alike: confidence, independent judgment, critical thinking, creative problem solving, and strong written and oral communication skills. This long standing educational tradition has carried Wooster to a new level of academic distinction.

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 I.S. Program as “exactly what should be happening” in college today.

The College of Wooster is now recognized as America’s Premier College for Mentored Undergraduate Research. When the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) launched its Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative early in 2015, 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.
EXTENDING WOOSTER’S DISTINCTIVENESS: Launching the APEX Program

In a dramatic and innovative development to extend Wooster’s mentoring of applied learning, APEX was created in 2012 to bring a team of experienced advisers together to collaboratively guide students through an intentional educational and professional planning process. Still in its infancy but evolving rapidly, APEX is being hailed as a breakthrough model for its comprehensive approach to blending and enhancing students’ understanding of their campus, classroom, and life experiences. discoverapex.wooster.edu

STRUCTURE
In launching APEX, Wooster has integrated seven services for students in a single physical location, thereby leveraging the impact of traditional elements of academic and student-life support. APEX currently integrates the services of Academic Advising, Learning Center, Registrar, Experiential Learning (including internships), Entrepreneurship, Off-Campus Studies, and Career Planning, enabling students to make connections between their academic interests and their professional goals through a wide variety of high impact experiences both on and off the campus.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
To be recognized as one of the premier student success programs within the liberal arts, APEX must constantly address and adapt to the diverse and changing needs of the Wooster student body. These guiding principles help to make APEX unique among student support centers in higher education:

▲ Culture APEX exudes a positive collaborative atmosphere. Important are a strong collective knowledge base, a clear message about the importance of ongoing mentorship, and professional staff who are committed to students and active in their respective fields.

▲ Comprehensive Advising The combination of academic, personal, and professional support combined in a single mission and lived out in a shared workspace allows advisers to work with students in their whole lives, as opposed to various support centers operating as independent silos.

▲ Mentored Undergraduate Integrated Advising APEX is the mentoring of individual students, extending the culture established by Independent Study and mentored undergraduate research. This personal and customized approach allows APEX to bring students along in developing the initiatives and skills needed for professional success and quality citizenship.

▲ Student-Centered Approach and Space Visitors notice and comment on the vibrant energy and enthusiasm in APEX. Students feel welcomed, comfortable, and supported whether they are studying, coming for an appointment, or working in collaboration with others on a project.

RESOURCES
The new Dean will be supported by an endowed resource base that generously underwrites the position, the program, and the APEX process. These resources not only provide for expanded APEX headquarters, creative staffing opportunities, and strategic planning for the future, but they will also offer the new Dean a “venture capital fund” for future program developments stemming from the core APEX concept.
Recognizing the rapid evolution of APEX and its growing impact on the Wooster community, the new Dean will be expected to embrace an agenda that includes:

**EMBRACING A COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE**  In conjunction with the seven APEX office directors, the Dean will sustain a team-centered approach for working together collaboratively. As a cohesive group, the APEX team will be expected to reach out and leverage other academic and administrative departments to help fulfill the APEX mission. An intense spirit of collaboration exists within the Wooster family and the new Dean’s success will be directly related to her/his ability to inquire thoughtfully, listen carefully, and lead effectively.

**CONNECTING WITH FACULTY & STAFF**
There is already widespread appreciation of the APEX mission at Wooster and it is anticipated that faculty in all departments will continue to recognize the value of partnerships with APEX. Being a gracefully aggressive advocate for APEX will be critical to the Dean’s success as she/he helps faculty and staff understand how students can advance their intellectual and professional preparation through the practical application of theory and various forms of experiential learning.

**CONNECTING WITH STUDENTS**
Student-centeredness is at the heart of the APEX mission and outreach. The Dean must be diligent in devising ways to facilitate extending access to APEX services for all students and working effectively with a particularly diverse and changing student population at Wooster.

**CONNECTING WITH THE CURRICULUM**
Future curricular design is already under discussion at Wooster. The new Dean is expected to contribute incisively to the conversations about the value and scope of experiential learning in future undergraduate curricula. An early understanding of the manner in which the Wooster community is exploring curricular change will be a critical part of the new Dean's success.
THE NEW DEAN’S AGENDA: The Future of APEX

ENHANCING THE WOOSTER VALUE PROPOSITION At a time when much of higher education is receiving scrutiny for its qualitative outcomes and cost effectiveness, APEX adds a distinctive and meaningful ingredient to Wooster’s value proposition. The Dean must be prepared to articulate effectively to all audiences the ways in which APEX helps to make Wooster’s liberal arts outcomes increasingly relevant and “worth it.”

EXTENDING THE APEX VISION Although APEX has provided an exciting and impressive component to the manner in which Wooster mentors its students, there remains a palpable opportunity to expand the APEX influence to off-campus constituents including alumni, parents, and a diverse network of prospective employers. A new Dean will be expected to bring additional creative insights to the future outlook for the program’s mission and vision.

BUILDING THE RESOURCE BASE As the influence and impact of APEX expands, so too may the resource base necessary for delivering its outcomes. The Dean should bring an ability to build a network of financial, human, and capital resources necessary for future success. Generously endowed at the outset, APEX should partner with the development office to increase its philanthropic appeal to alumni, parents, and friends.

ASSESSING THE APEX PROGRAM Although the impact of APEX today is wholly positive, it is still largely anecdotal. The Dean will be expected to build an assessment matrix that will reinforce the affirming outcomes that already exist, while at the same time discerning possible mid-course corrections and new opportunities. Budget analysis will also be integral to the success of this evaluation system.
The vision for APEX calls for enterprising academic leadership to be exercised by the new Dean at Wooster, internally and externally. That said, the successful candidate will bring two primary and essential qualities to the assignment in order for her/him to be effective. The new Dean will be:

**Knowledgeable about and experienced with undergraduate liberal arts education**, especially in an independent college setting where faculty/student/staff relationships are key to successful educational outcomes;

**Understanding of and experienced with the external community** (business, government, non-profits, and other stakeholders), where strong connections will build linkages and provide necessary traction for the long term objectives of the APEX program.

A master’s degree is required and a Ph.D. is desirable. Equally important is a significant body of experience that will a) speak to both of the essential qualities outlined above and b) provide the Dean with the credibility needed to champion the value of experiential education in the liberal arts setting.

Personal characteristics of warmth, authenticity, integrity, and a sense of humor will be important. Additional professional qualities will define the new Dean as:

- **A visionary leader**, who can articulate with clarity the mission of APEX;
- **An effective communicator**, who will build genuine interpersonal relationships with ease;
- **An able connector**, who can develop mutually beneficial partnerships with a wide variety of groups and individuals whose interests in APEX will benefit everyone involved;
- **A seasoned collaborator**, who can keep all APEX stakeholders informed and engaged;
- **A person of transparency**, who will build trust and unify support around APEX concepts;
- **A proven manager**, who will care for detail, strengthen teamwork, and maintain a responsible financial operation;
- **A person who will focus on the students** and their need for APEX services, while enjoying meaningful interaction with a diverse undergraduate community.
THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The APEX Search Committee will be accepting nominations and applications on a rolling basis throughout the late winter and early spring. The candidate pool will be narrowed initially in mid-April, although applications will be accepted until a new Dean is selected. For the most favorable consideration, applications should be submitted by April 11, 2016. The Dean will be invited to begin work this summer, on or about July 1, 2016.

Dr. Thomas B. Courtice is the Search Consultant assisting with this search. Nominators and prospective candidates may contact him at: Tom.Courtice@gmail.com or 614-395-6631.

Application materials should be submitted to:
Dr. Carolyn Newton, Provost
Search Chair, Dean of APEX,
WoosterAPEXDean@gmail.com

Materials should include a letter of candidacy that responds to the New Dean’s Agenda, 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.
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 the 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. Since then the College has raised $40 million to build the new Williams Hall of Life Science, scheduled to open in the Fall of 2018. Currently, the College is nearing the announcement of a new comprehensive fund-raising campaign.

Perhaps nowhere is the momentum more evident than in a fiercely competitive enrollment market-place. Since 2007, applications for admission to Wooster have jumped 80 percent. 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 half of this year’s incoming first-year students are in the top 10 percent of their high school class. Domestic multiethnic and international students will account for about one in three members of the first-year class, and one in five are eligible for Pell Grants.
FAST FACTS

Founded on December 18, 1866

Located in Wooster, Ohio, a community of 26,000, approximately 55 miles southwest of Cleveland

Campus: 240 acres

Academic calendar: Semesters

Degrees conferred: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Music, and Bachelor of Music Education

Full-time faculty: 166

Full-time faculty holding Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree: 96%

Student-faculty ratio: 11 to 1

Total enrollment (2016): 2,058

- 55% women, 45% men
- 19% domestic students of color
- 10% international
- 35% Ohio, 65% non-Ohio
- 45 states and 44 countries represented

Students living on-campus: 99%

Tuition, fees, room & board (2015-16): $55,600

Students receiving financial aid: more than 75%

Average aid package: $35,081

Students who are Pell Grant recipients: 19%

Endowment market value (April 30, 2015): $274 million

Athletics: 23 intercollegiate teams (NCAA Division III)

Nickname: Fighting Scots

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