Leadership Profile

Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs

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June 2016

This leadership Profile is intended to provide information about Occidental College and the position of Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs. It is designed to assist qualified individuals in assessing their interest in this position.
The Opportunity

Occidental College invites inquiries, nominations, and applications for the position of Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs (Dean/VPSA).

Reporting to the President, the Dean/VPSA is responsible for the planning and direction of all Occidental College programs in the Division of Student Affairs, as well as co-curricular and developmental programming that supports the academic mission of the College. Working in close collaboration with students, faculty, and staff, the Dean/VPSA is responsible for implementing learning opportunities that bridge academic and student affairs programs, particularly those collaborations which ensure student success; persistence to graduation; leadership development; career preparation; and engagement in a robustly diverse community.

The successful candidate will have an advanced degree, preferably in higher education administration or student personnel, with a doctorate preferred; at least ten years of progressively responsible and relevant experience, including five or more years of supervisory experience; a demonstrated commitment to collaborative teamwork; demonstrated success supporting an ethnically and culturally diverse student body; the ability to work productively with faculty, academic administrators, staff, students, and student organizations, preferably in a small liberal arts setting; working knowledge of student learning, contemporary residential life, campus safety, theories and best practices for student affairs work; a keen awareness of current college student trends and issues; and the ability to effectively assess programs and identify those that need improvement.

Founded in 1887, Occidental is a small, highly selective, and diverse liberal arts college located near the heart of Los Angeles, CA. The mission of Occidental College is to provide to a gifted and diverse group of students a residential educational experience of the highest quality – one that prepares them for leadership in an increasingly complex, interdependent, and pluralistic world. The distinctive interdisciplinary and multicultural focus of the College's academic program seeks to foster both the fulfillment of individual aspirations and a deeply rooted commitment to the public good. The small size and strong sense of community, rigorous curriculum, superb faculty, diverse student body, and access to the resources of Los Angeles, make Occidental intimate in scale but infinite in scope.

Information about how to nominate someone or to apply for this opportunity can be found in the section titled “Procedure for Candidacy” at the end of this document.

The Role of the Dean of Students and Vice President for Student Affairs

The Dean/VPSA directly oversees the Division of Student Affairs, which provides advocacy, service, support, and engagement opportunities for students in alignment with the institutional mission. The Dean/VPSA reports directly to President Jonathan Veitch and serves as a member of the institution’s senior administrative team.
The Division of Student Affairs is comprised of several departments that contribute to the success and wellbeing of Occidental College students.

- Dean of Students Office
- Emmons Student Wellness Center including Project S.A.F.E. (for a Sexual Assault Free Environment)
- Intercultural Affairs
- Neighborhood Partnership Program
- Office of Community Engagement
- Office of Religious and Spiritual Life
- Office of Student Life
- Residential Education and Housing Services
- Student Conduct
- Upward Bound

The Dean/VPSA is responsible for: the supervision of strategies, programs, policies, and assessment related to student programs/activities and organizations, including student government; community standards and student conduct; outreach, services, and case management for at-risk students; crisis management; effective communication with parents and faculty on issues of student life; and a comprehensive program of staff development for the division.

The Dean/VPSA will work across the institution to create and maintain a climate that fosters student learning, engagement, and development while enhancing a strong sense of community and an inclusive environment. A strong commitment to Occidental’s mission, vision and strategic plan, and to promoting the wellbeing of a diverse student body is essential.

The Dean/VPSA will be a strong and experienced leader with knowledge of student development theory and current best practices in student affairs, and will meet identified goals to enhance the Oxy student experience both programmatically and developmentally with the objective of promoting student success while at Oxy and after graduation. This person will implement effective operational practices including personnel development and budget stewardship and management, and will promote assessment through data analysis to build more effective programs and improve student services.

The College values engagement in the community and expects the Dean/VPSA to play a highly visible role on campus and to engage fully in the life of the campus.

Click to view the Student Affairs 2014-15 Annual Report
Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The new Dean/VPSA is responsible for developing a comprehensive vision and building a strategic plan for student life, which creates a co-curricular experience that complements and parallels the quality and richness of the academic program at the College. The Dean/VPSA will lead a team of student affairs professionals and will work in collaboration with smart, involved, and empowered students, dedicated faculty and administrators, and other committed stakeholders, to build consensus and move forward on key initiatives to reinforce Occidental College’s commitment to equity and excellence. The Dean/VPSA will develop strategies and metrics to address specific issues identified through discussion with students, faculty, and in campus surveys, with the goal of improving the student co-curricular experience.

The leadership at Occidental College recognizes the significant role a vibrant student affairs program can play in the overall success of the institution and that Student Affairs is well positioned to work closely with students, faculty, and staff to proactively address the complex issues that students are facing in their undergraduate years. The new Dean/VPSA will create opportunities for campus-wide conversation on key student life issues including, but not limited to: developing the College’s multicultural and pluralistic community; the alcohol and student conduct policies; the role of Greek life in the overall campus social and residential experience; and planning for optimal on-campus programming.

This is a transformational opportunity: the new Dean/VPSA will have the opportunity to consider all aspects of the existing student affairs program and, in close collaboration with students, faculty, and staff, to determine the best structure, programs, supervisory relationships and team to achieve the goals.

Specific challenges and opportunities include the following:

**Vision:** The Dean/VPSA will lead an inclusive and participatory effort to develop a transformative vision for Student Affairs in the context of an academically rigorous, undergraduate-focused, residential liberal arts college. Occidental College has a rich tradition of students fully engaging in the intellectual and social life of the community. The Dean/VPSA will be an advocate for students and for the Student Affairs staff, and will embrace the opportunity to revitalize the Student Affairs organization for a generation of students with a passion for social justice and the energy and commitment to take full advantage of the academic and co-curricular resources offered by the College.

**Commitment to diversity:** Occidental College has a proud tradition of attracting and educating a broadly diverse student body and of celebrating the essential link between diversity and excellence. The community greatly values diversity in all of its forms: race; age; national origin, gender; gender expression; religion; learning differences; ability; socioeconomic and veteran status; and sexual orientation. The Dean/VPSA will engage with students, faculty, and
administrators on complex matters of equity and inclusion and will work closely with the Chief Diversity Officer to continue to advance multicultural initiatives on campus.

**Lead the professional development of a talented staff:** The Dean/VPSA will be an established leader in the field, committed to the professional development of staff. This person will recognize and value the expertise of the staff, while modeling student affairs best practice that goes well beyond crisis management. As an established and progressive intellectual leader in student affairs, the Dean/VPSA will develop a model of professional engagement that is well suited to the needs of a residential college, including opportunities for interaction with faculty, parents, and alumni. The Dean/VPSA will support and utilize the existing divisional commitment to assessment in order to guide the development of strategy within Student Affairs. Part of the culture of Occidental is a strong belief in the value of civil debate and respectful disagreement: the Dean/VPSA will move with ease in this culture as a peer and colleague of the faculty and the senior administrators.

**Reenergize campus social life:** Occidental works hard to foster and maintain a vibrant, healthy, campus-based social experience for its largely residential student population. The new Dean/VPSA will be expected to assess the complex issues that flow from a residential campus social life, including the use/abuse of alcohol/drugs on campus, and the various policy issues and other concerns that result from campus social events, both in residence halls and in other common spaces. Occidental students are committed and ready to engage with the Dean/VPSA to create a new model for campus social life.

**Engage with and enjoy contact with students:** The Dean/VPSA will be a warm and caring leader who engenders trust and respect from students. This person will model visibility, presence, and engagement at a very high level in the informal life of the campus and will celebrate the many accomplishments and talents of the Occidental student body. The Dean/VPSA will convene conversations with students, faculty, and Student Affairs colleagues on issues of great importance to the College and will work easily within the established governance structures for student and faculty involvement in co-curricular life, while ensuring that student voices are heard and valued on a wide variety of issues. These efforts will require excellent communication and leadership skills at all levels - from the interpersonal skills to engage meaningfully in a difficult conversation, to the leadership presence to command a diverse audience in a public setting.

**Title IX and Other Civil Rights Issues:** The new Dean/VPSA will have experience developing and implementing policy and best practices around Title IX and other civil rights issues, and will work closely and collaboratively with the Title IX Coordinator, Chief Diversity Officer, legal counsel, and other institutional leaders to ensure that the College appropriately investigates and responds to complaints, and to educate students, faculty, parents and other stakeholders about the College’s comprehensive prevention efforts, procedures, and protections offered to students involved in sexual misconduct and other civil rights complaints.

The Dean/VPSA will lead at a time of great challenge and great promise, both at the College and in the field of Student Affairs as a whole. It is imperative that the leader of Student Affairs at Occidental College recognizes the enormous positive impact that engagement in life outside of the classroom, in a healthy and respectful setting, can have on the overall education of a diverse and talented student body.
Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Occidental College seeks a thoughtful, inspiring, dynamic, and experienced leader who will enhance the student experience through their knowledge of student learning theories and best practices. Critical to the new Dean’s success will be a commitment to diversity and excellence; a track record of leading innovative change in a complex organization; demonstrated ability to listen to, communicate with, and work collaboratively and effectively with a broad array of constituents (often with diverging views). Successful experience in strategic planning, personnel and organizational management, and resource allocation is also necessary.

The ideal candidate will possess a minimum of ten years of professional experience in higher education student affairs with progressive leadership and supervisory responsibilities; experience/involvement with student programming and support services, crisis management, investigation and resolution of complaints, student conduct programs; fundraising; and a record of success in working with students, faculty, administrators, staff, and parents.

In particular, candidates will have the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

**Student Affairs leadership experience:** The Dean/VPSA will bring a deep background and experience as a leader in student affairs; an understanding of the complex issues that arise in a residential liberal arts institution; and enthusiasm for front-line student affairs work that is done in close collaboration with students and faculty while developing a model of student affairs management that emphasizes proactive methods and strategic planning. Excellent oral and written communication; interpersonal, and organizational skills are paramount. This is a transformational opportunity. The new Dean/VPSA will have the opportunity to consider all aspects of the existing Student Affairs program and, in close collaboration with students, faculty, and staff, determine the best structure, programming, services, supervisory relationships, and team to achieve the goal of enhancing the quality of life of all students.

**Personnel and budget management experience:** A strong record of administrative experience and achievement; ability to gain the confidence and support of staff, administrators, and faculty; success as a skilled and strategic manager of resources and operations, especially in tight fiscal environments; and capacity to develop and manage an effective organization, including creating and implementing long-range plans.

**Advocacy:** A key strategist and spokesperson for the changing needs of students and for ensuring that all students’ needs are clearly understood in the community, the Dean/VPSA will demonstrate commitment to student rights and responsibilities and have a track record of successfully advocating for student needs with the senior administrative team, board of trustees, faculty, and others by utilizing research, data, best practices, and innovative programming to address emerging issues on campus.

**Personal style:** Collegiality, inclusiveness, and optimism; ability to build trust and communicate effectively with tact and wisdom; genuine pleasure in the company of students and faculty; ability to listen and to connect; openness to new ideas; professional expertise coupled with a desire and ability to make a difference; sensitivity, approachability, and warmth; the highest sense of integrity and ethics; energy; grace under pressure and a sense of humor.
Academic accomplishment: Master’s degree required and doctoral degree strongly preferred; evidence of ongoing professional development and engagement with the latest research in student affairs; and an ability to speak the languages of both the classroom and the traditional areas of student affairs as well as experience creating programs that integrate the two to enhance students’ educational experiences.

Collaborative and transparent leadership: Dynamic leadership and a collaborative, transparent management style; commitment to the College’s tradition of shared governance; ability to serve as an effective and collegial member of the President’s senior leadership team and a desire to be part of an administrative structure in which all members contribute to the conversation about issues and policies across the College; ability to engage the campus community in open and mutually respectful discussion; strong political skills and commitment to relationship building across the institution; and the capacity and willingness to make difficult, timely, and sometimes unpopular decisions.

Commitment to diversity: The College community greatly values diversity in all of its forms, such as race; age; national origin, gender; gender expression; religion; learning differences; ability; socioeconomic and veteran status; and sexual orientation. The successful candidate will have experience promoting diversity and building inclusivity among students, faculty, and staff, and the ability to work appropriately and cooperatively with diverse populations. An individual who, in collaboration with the College’s Vice President for Equity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Dean and Title IX Coordinator, will translate Occidental’s commitment to social justice, diversity, and inclusion into meaningful community dialogue and programs that support an ever-evolving, inclusive learning environment.

High visibility role: A leader who thrives in a liberal arts setting, enjoys working with students and actively connects with all members of the community in dialogue and reflection. The Dean/VPSA will build relationships with and interact directly and positively with a wide variety of constituents – students, alumnae/i, administrative colleagues, faculty, staff, parents of current and prospective students, neighbors, and community leaders – and serve as a spokesperson for the College and a highly visible member of the broader community.
Occidental College: An Overview

Occidental College is an independent, coeducational college of liberal arts and sciences. Although founded in 1887 by a group of Presbyterian ministers and laymen, Occidental has had no formal religious association since 1910. It is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees, is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and holds membership in a number of regional and national organizations related to higher education. The Delta of California Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was established at Occidental in 1926.

The first baccalaureate degree was conferred in 1893 and graduate instruction leading to the Master of Arts degree in selected fields was inaugurated in 1922.

Occidental seeks to provide an education of high quality in the best tradition of the liberal arts, emphasizing thorough competence in a chosen field of study, together with a broad understanding of historical and cultural heritage and the relationships among fields of knowledge.

Students and faculty at Occidental are engaged in an intellectual partnership in which student initiative and responsibility are encouraged. To an uncommon degree, students may participate in the construction of their own educational programs. Independent study and interdepartmental programs are encouraged.

Occidental students represent varied intellectual interests, socioeconomic backgrounds, racial and ethnic groups, religious beliefs, nationalities and social and political convictions. This diversity finds its expression not only in the variety of academic programs and options open to the student but also through the entire range of student organizations and enterprises, college cultural events, visiting lecturers and forums, all of which taken together comprise the many facets of life in an invigorating academic community.

The College is committed to a philosophy of total education. Intellectual capability is a dominant component but is conceived of as one dimension in a process that includes and stresses personal, ethical, social and political growth toward maturation as well. The high percentage of students in residence at the College works toward the achievement of this objective.

Successful Occidental students are self-motivated, independent-minded and intellectually talented people. They base their judgments upon respect for evidence, ideas, and a deep concern for values, both private and public. They are alert to the possibilities of betterment in themselves, their college and their society. Above all, they realize that no education is finished, that they are in college to learn how to learn, so that they may carry on their own education for the rest of their lives.
Mission

The mission of Occidental College is to provide a gifted and diverse group of students with a total educational experience of the highest quality—one that prepares them for leadership in an increasingly complex, interdependent and pluralistic world.

The distinctive interdisciplinary and multicultural focus of the College's academic program seeks to foster both the fulfillment of individual aspirations and a deeply rooted commitment to the public good.

This mission is anchored by four cornerstones: excellence, equity, community and service. These building blocks, in one form or another, have long been the basis for the College’s commitment to furthering the development of responsible leaders and citizens for our democratic society and changing world.

For additional information on Occidental College please visit www.oxy.edu. Candidates may find the additional links below helpful in understanding Occidental:

Strategic Plan
Factbook
Institutional Research (IRAP)
Procedure for Candidacy

Nominations, expressions of interest and applications are invited. Interested individuals should provide a letter describing their interest in and qualifications for the position, a curriculum vitae or resume and the names and contact information of five references (Candidates will be notified before references are contacted). Review of candidate materials will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled; for full consideration, applicant materials should be received by September 1, 2016.

These materials should be sent electronically, via e-mail, to the Occidental College's executive search consultants Sheila Murphy, Jennifer G. Bauer and Oliver Tomlin at OXYVPSA@wittkieffer.com. The consultants can be reached through the office of Angela Bettis at (301) 654-5070.

Occidental College values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other status protected by law.

The material presented in this position specification should be relied on for informational purposes only. This material has been copied, compiled, or quoted in part from Occidental College documents and personal interviews and is believed to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and factual situations govern.
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