



THE COUNCIL OF
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

PRESIDENTIAL VOCATION AND INSTITUTIONAL MISSION

A Seminar for Prospective College and University Presidents

A program for individuals who are considering whether to seek a college or university presidency—and their spouses—designed to help them think deeply about their own sense of vocation, the significance of mission in an institution they might lead, and how alignment between personal vocation and institutional mission fosters effective presidential leadership.

Supported by Lilly Endowment Inc.

NOMINATION DEADLINE: February 10, 2012

SUMMER SEMINAR: July 8–11, 2012 • Stowe, Vermont
WINTER SEMINAR: February 25–26, 2013 • Location to be announced

“Quite honestly, one of the most valuable seminars or events in my academic/administrative career.”

VOCATION AND MISSION

Presidential Vocation and Institutional Mission is a seminar-based program designed to help prospective college and university presidents—and their spouses or partners—clarify their own sense of personal vocation and to weigh it in the context of the missions of institutions they lead and might lead in the future. Through a series of structured conversations, participants engage in an exploration of the ways in which greater understanding and alignment of personal vocation and institutional mission can be resources for effective presidential leadership. The program, funded by a generous grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., will include up to 20 participants and their spouses.

The Presidential Vocation and Institutional Mission program seeks to increase the commitment across American higher education to vocation and mission as fundamentally linked concepts for building and sustaining effective presidencies in independent colleges and universities. The program rests on two premises:

- Presidential leadership is strengthened by a congruence of institutional mission and presidential vocation; and
- Carefully structured opportunities for reflection and dialogue can help prospective presidents and spouses envision their prospective roles.

Why have such a program? Even the most successful presidents often note wistfully the lack of balance between their professional and personal lives. The alignment of vocation and mission presented in this program offers an alternative to “balance.” All too often in recent years, presidencies have been cut short by a misalignment between personal vocation and institutional mission. For example, imagine a highly participatory campus culture in which a “visionary” president makes insightful but unilateral pronouncements on what needs to change. Or consider a troubled college steeped in tradition with a reforming president who was charged by the board of trustees to make major changes.

“Alignment” is not to be confused with “identical” or even “profoundly alike.” Some presidents of religiously-affiliated colleges whose personal faith tradition differs from those of the institution have achieved long tenure and wide acclaim because they adopted the cause of the college that selected them. Traditional institutions have been carefully led to revise their missions and structures by thoughtful presidents who understood future needs while respecting past traditions. Alignment is about personal and educational purpose, the relationship between faith and reason, and the nature of the learning community.

This program aims to help those likely to be future presidents to achieve great things for their institutions and to avoid being “the right person in the wrong place.”

“The mentoring was for me one of the most valuable aspects of this seminar.”

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Presidential Vocation. Individuals often bring to a presidency a deep sense of vocation or calling to the work of leading a specific college or university. One important dimension of a presidency is to discover ways in which the individual’s vocation connects with—and may be animated by—the institution’s mission. Understood in this way, vocation is not about a job or a career but about commitments that are very personal in combination with obligations that are very public. A sense of vocation is likely also to have multiple origins, representing a unique combination of an individual’s experiences and professional competence. In addition, a vocational commitment can provide an appreciation for the kinds of endeavors that offer personal satisfaction, a sense of meaning, and, in many cases, a spiritually-grounded belief about the importance of work as president. Such a calling offers the promise of self-knowledge at a level that can contribute significantly to presidential success.

Institutional Mission. The mission of a college or university springs from multiple sources. It may include a particular educational philosophy, the values of a founding religious denomination, the history of a place or region, and distinctive characteristics of a student population. Each institution, as a result, has a self-definition that comes to life in oft-repeated stories, beloved campus features, cherished events, and memories of respected individuals. Presidents, to a greater extent than others at the institution, must be able to understand, appreciate, learn from, and represent these facets of institutional mission. Indeed, they must refine and extend the mission through the work of their administration and, of course, through their rhetoric or, in Burton Clark’s words, the saga of the institution.

Spouses. Spouses and partners are strongly encouraged to engage fully in this exploration and to participate in every session of the seminar. Whether or not a spouse takes on responsibilities that have traditionally been expected of the president’s wife or husband, the presidency has profound implications for marital life. The program operates on the premise that each participant has his or her own vocation. Coming to discern one’s own calling can contribute significantly to a sense of fulfillment, whether in the role of presidential spouse or in any other occupation.

Fifth Offering. This program—offered for the fifth time in 2012–2013—provides up to 20 nominees and the spouses of nominees with the opportunity for candid, intense, small-group discussion among their peers about presidential vocation and institutional mission. Guiding the discussions will be facilitators—experienced college presidents and spouses—who have thought deeply about matters of personal vocation and institutional mission as they relate to the college or university presidency—from both religious and secular perspectives.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Before the Summer Seminar (Late Spring 2012)

Participants will be expected to read a selection of short essays in preparation for the Summer Seminar.

Summer Seminar (July 8–11, 2012)

A four-day Summer Seminar will be held at the Stoweflake Mountain Hotel, situated in beautiful Stowe, Vermont, at the base of Mount Mansfield. Please consult the outline of sample seminar topics and readings as well as program facilitators included in this brochure.

Between the Summer Seminar and the Winter Seminar

During the fall, each participant will have two telephone consultations with one of the seminar facilitators. The purpose of these consultations for prospective presidents will be to consider how their reflections on vocation and mission from the summer intersect with their evaluation of potential opportunities to serve as president. Participants will read several additional selections before the Winter Seminar.

Winter Seminar (February 25–26, 2013)

This event will extend the experience of the Summer Seminar, incorporating reflections based on the fall consultations with facilitators and a set of new readings.

After the Winter Seminar (Spring 2013)

Each participant will have one telephone consultation with a seminar facilitator during the spring. The topics of the final consultation will be:

- Changes in participants' sense of personal vocation and understanding of institutional mission;
- Consequences of participation in the program; and
- Future plans in light of the program.

PROGRAM FACILITATORS

William V. Frame, CIC senior advisor and program director, 2005–present; president of Augsburg College, 1997–2006

Margaret Carney, OSF, president of St. Bonaventure University, 2004–present

Joel Cunningham, vice chancellor and president of Sewanee: The University of the South, 2000–2010; president of Susquehanna University, 1984–2000

Trudy Cunningham, senior consultant for admissions and advising and presidential spouse at Sewanee: The University of the South, 2000–2010; previously associate dean of engineering at Bucknell University

Anne Frame, presidential spouse at Augsburg College, 1997–2006; previously chief financial officer of Financial Pacific Corporation and vice president of Sanwa Business Credit Corporation

Frederik Ohles, president of Nebraska Wesleyan University, 2007–present

“The facilitators were really excellent. I especially appreciated having [their] insight into the presidency as a couple.”

“The small group discussions were quite beneficial. They encouraged interaction [and] allowed ideas to be discussed in an intimate, friendly, safe environment.”

SAMPLE SEMINAR TOPICS AND READINGS

The following topics and readings, based on the syllabi of previous seminars, are representative of what will be used in the 2012–2013 program. Final details will be available in spring 2012.

Topic I. The Distinctive Attributes of Vocation and Vocational Thinking

Frederick Buechner, “Vocation,” from *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*

Pierre de Calan, *Cosmas, or the Love of God*

Jack Fortin, “Longing for a Centered Life” from *Centered Life*

Selected readings from Mark R. Schwehn and Dorothy C. Bass, eds., *Leading Lives That Matter*

Topic II. The Vocation of a College President

Lee Hardy, “Balancing Commitments: Work and Vocation,” from *The Fabric of This World*

Hugh Hecllo, *On Thinking Institutionally*

James T. Laney, “The Education of the Heart,” address of October, 1984, to Harvard Alumni Association

Topic III. Vision, Mission, and Saga in Institutional Life

Burton B. Clark, “The Making of an Organizational Saga,” from *The Distinctive College: Antioch, Reed & Swarthmore*

Jim Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*

Topic IV. Facing the Challenges that Come with Vocation

Abraham Lincoln, “The Political Religion of the Nation: Address Before the Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois,”
January 27, 1838, and “Second Inaugural Address,” March 4, 1865

Alexis de Tocqueville, selections from *Democracy in America*

Topic V. Finding Resources in Friendship and Faith to Strengthen Vocation

Letters of Abigail and John Adams in 1776

Aristotle, “On Friendship,” from *The Nicomachean Ethics*

Willa Cather, “Two Friends,” from *Obscure Destinies*

Topic VI. Summing Up

Jill Ker Conway, “A Different Choice,” from *True North*

Ronald A. Heifetz and Martin Linsky, selections from *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading*

Selected readings by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Robert Frost, Amy Lowell, Rainer Maria Rilke, May Sarton, and William Wordsworth.

COSTS

Most expenses, including travel to both the Summer and Winter Seminars, lodging, meals, consultations, and materials will be covered by the program. Spouses’ travel, lodging, and meals also will be covered. There is a one-time registration fee of \$300 for the prospective president and \$200 for an accompanying spouse due upon acceptance into the program.

NOMINATION PROCEDURE

Senior administrators of CIC member institutions are eligible to be nominated. Presidents who wish to nominate one of their current senior administrators for participation in the 2012–2013 Presidential Vocation and Institutional Mission program are asked to submit a nomination packet consisting of the following items:

1. A **nomination cover sheet**, available at www.cic.edu/VocationMission, that includes contact information for the nominee and nominator as well as professional and personal information about the nominee;
2. A **reflective statement** of no more than two pages prepared by the nominee on (a) his or her own sense of personal vocation; (b) the role of mission in higher education; and (c) anticipated benefits—considered in the spirit of this program—for the nominee and institutions he or she might serve. Reviewers will carefully consider whether the nominee’s statement addresses the selection criteria (see below);
3. The nominee’s **curriculum vitae**; and
4. A **letter of nomination** from the president of the nominee’s current institution that addresses the nominee’s potential readiness for the presidency and how the nominee will benefit from participation in this program with its distinctive attention to presidential vocation and institutional mission.

Please submit the completed nomination cover sheet, reflective statement, curriculum vitae, and letter of nomination as a single packet, preferably by email, to:

Presidential Vocation and Institutional Mission Program

Council of Independent Colleges

One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 320 • Washington, DC 20036-1142

Email: vocationprospective@cic.nche.edu • Fax: (202) 466-7238

Nominations received by the deadline of **February 10, 2012**, will be given first consideration. Selected participants will be notified by **March 15, 2012**.

Nominators and prospective participants can direct questions about the program to William V. Frame, CIC senior advisor and program director, by email at wframe@cic.nche.edu or to Harold V. Hartley III, CIC senior vice president, by telephone at (202) 466-7230 or email at hhartley@cic.nche.edu.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to select participants:

- Evidence that the individual has had relevant experience and has demonstrated the potential to serve with success as a college president in the next step of his or her career;
- Evidence that the individual has reflected on his or her own sense of vocation, has contemplated the relevance of institutional mission for the presidency, and is prepared to engage in frank and open discussion of these matters with other program participants;
- Evidence that the individual takes a broad view of the issues involved in fulfilling the expectations of a college or university presidency; and
- The individual’s likely contribution to the diversity of perspectives and experiences in the program.

