The Search for a President

The Board of Trustees and its Presidential Search Committee are initiating a search for the eighth president of Colby-Sawyer College. The search begins after ten years of significant institutional growth and remarkable achievement under the presidential leadership of Dr. Anne Ponder. During the 2005-06 academic year, Dr. Phil Jordan is serving as Colby-Sawyer’s interim president.

Introduction

Responding to changing times and the educational needs of students, Colby-Sawyer is a college that has reconstituted itself and grown throughout its history. Established in 1837 as New London Academy, classes were first held in a building recently donated by the college to the town for use as administrative offices. In 1878, the Academy was renamed Colby Academy, recognizing the family of the school’s first teacher and principal, Susan Colby. In 1928, after 90 years as a coeducational academy, Colby Academy became a junior college for women. In 1943, the college charter was amended to allow for the introduction of baccalaureate degrees and women gradually enrolled in these programs in the subsequent 30 years. In 1975, the college was renamed Colby-Sawyer and in 1990, the college returned to its coeducational roots by beginning to admit both men and women.

The college has successfully blended liberal studies and professional programs in a distinctive undergraduate curriculum which includes a new Liberal Education Program at its foundation. This imaginative program emerged from a shared understanding that the best undergraduate education is grounded in the liberal arts and sciences. To that end, the Liberal Education Program asks all students to complete a set of courses in four components, the most innovative of which is the Pathways component. Pathways is comprised of five courses, all of which relate to an integrative theme.
Colby-Sawyer offers thirteen undergraduate degree programs. Bachelor of Arts degrees are awarded for study in Studio Arts; Biology; Communication Studies; English; History, Society and Culture; and Psychology. Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees are awarded in Graphic Design and Studio Art. Bachelor of Science degrees are available in Business Administration; Child Development; Community and Environmental Studies; Nursing; and Exercise and Sport Sciences. Teacher certification is also available in Art Education (K-12); Early Childhood Education (N-3); English Language Arts (5-12); and Social Studies Education (5-12).

Today, the college enjoys an enviable position in the fabric of New England higher education, resulting from significant qualitative and quantitative growth, and a continued commitment to serve a broad array of student achievement levels. The intentional integration of curriculum and co-curriculum, and a unique focus on individual growth and development provide a distinctly attractive educational profile for Colby-Sawyer College.

A key factor in the accomplishment of this profile is the energetic commitment and active involvement of 115 full and part-time faculty members and 269 staff. A gifted full-time faculty teaches 74 percent of all classes and is committed to their roles as teachers, advisors, and mentors. Adjunct faculty supplement the classroom needs of the college by teaching 26 percent of all classes with a dedication to teaching similar to that of their full-time colleagues. Over 80 percent of full-time faculty holds terminal degrees appropriate to their field of teaching. Faculty, with the consistent involvement of a closely knit and highly professional group of their staff colleagues, effectively provide a total educational program intentionally designed with a “student first” priority.

As a result, nearly 1,000 students now enroll at Colby-Sawyer from five foreign countries and 23 states, with a heavy regional concentration from New England. Students benefit greatly from the intimacy of a Colby-Sawyer environment that encourages confidence while challenging individuals to reach their full potential academically, socially, and personally. The student-to-faculty ratio is 12:1, average class size is under 18, internships provide for the valuable practical application of theory for nearly all undergraduates, and a wide variety of activities, organizations, club and intramural sports are available. The athletic program provides competitive opportunity for student-athletes in an NCAA Division III program offering 16 sports (seven for men, eight for women and one coeducational), ECSC Alpine ski racing, and IHSA equestrian program.

In 1999, the college combined the Library and Information Technology programs by establishing the Information Resources (IR) department, aimed at strengthening institutional support for the research, curricular, academic, and administrative needs of the college. This new initiative has created an opportunity to integrate technology further
into traditional programs while providing greater access to services that are central to Colby-Sawyer’s academic mission.

Colby-Sawyer’s location also provides value to this special undergraduate experience. The stunning 200 acre campus is located in New Hampshire’s beautiful Dartmouth-Lake Sunapee region, offering spectacular mountain views and accommodating 29 buildings, most of which reflect handsome Georgian architecture. The most recent campus addition is the Curtis L. Ivey Science Center, opened in 2004 and providing 33,000 square feet of academic facilities for the department of Natural Sciences and the Community and Environmental Studies program. Other campus buildings of note include the Susan Colgate Cleveland Library and Learning Center, converted from two pre-Civil War barns to a beautiful blend of the historic and the contemporary; the Hogan Sports Center, housing a competition-size pool, a 20,000-square-foot field house, and well-equipped fitness center; eleven residence halls; and Lethbridge Lodge, an informal space for student activity, supported by the post-and-beam structure from New London’s first meeting house (1788).

Additionally important in the consideration of Colby-Sawyer’s location is the charming New Hampshire town of New London, a community to which the college is inextricably and historically tied. The people of New London are proud of Colby-Sawyer’s accomplishments and value the presence of this fine college as an integral part of their way of life.

The Board of Trustees at Colby-Sawyer totals 22 persons who are engaged in and informed about the life of the college, and who are clear about their fiduciary responsibility and their role in policy making. Their involvement is fostered through an active committee structure and a healthy interaction with senior staff, faculty, and students. From time to time, trustee expertise and leadership are extended through the creation of special purpose ad-hoc committees, such as the current effort to work with campus constituents in the review of faculty contract and tenure policies.

THE AGENDA FOR FUTURE LEADERSHIP

Colby-Sawyer College has enjoyed a decade of impressive growth and renewed stature in the fabric of New England higher education. As a result, the next president will benefit from a general sense of goodwill and support that exists within and among all of the college’s constituent groups -- trustees, students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and friends. These conditions provide an affirming foundation for facing the challenges in the college’s future.

Extending Strategic Planning - The college is accustomed to a widely consultative planning process, which must remain as a critical ingredient in all future planning activity. Moreover, future planning efforts should continue to hold the welfare of
students and the quality of the learning community as a primary focus. With this understanding, the next president will contemplate new issues and important decisions as the next iteration of planning benchmarks is developed. Fundamental consideration must be given to if and how Colby-Sawyer should continue to grow quantitatively, while recognizing the necessity of continued qualitative growth. The next president will need to offer sensitivity and strategic insights in order to extend an effective planning process and thereby build the foundation for the next chapter in Colby-Sawyer’s development.

Sustaining a Consultative Community - Colby-Sawyer will remain a relatively small college in which the sense of community is palpable. To be an effective leader in this campus culture, the next president will listen carefully, discuss openly, question thoughtfully, and consult widely. All stakeholders want to be included in this process and each constituency has an important perspective to contribute on issues of importance to the college. While not diminishing the need for decisive and timely decision making, the consultative skills needed to sustain the sense of community at Colby-Sawyer are extremely important in the next generation of leadership.

Resource and Revenue Development – The need for enhancing revenue streams in support of the college’s people, programs, and facilities will be essential in the future. While the last decade has produced a series of balanced budgets, enrollment gains, and a substantial increase in the endowment, more will need to be done if the college is to prosper. The next president must comfortably and aggressively manage programs in college advancement and enrollment management to their desired outcomes.

- **College Advancement and Fund Raising**: Although significant strides have been made in this area of the Colby-Sawyer program, everyone acknowledges that the current endowment of $20 million needs to grow to more adequately support an annual operation of $34 million. The further development of a widespread philanthropic culture within the family of alumni and friends at Colby-Sawyer will be a primary focus for the next president. Endowment growth, capital needs, and annual operating concerns will call for the next president to effectively and passionately communicate the Colby-Sawyer story to all potential donors.

- **Enrollment Management and Admissions**: The last ten years have seen a 35 percent increase in enrollment, but Colby-Sawyer will continue to remain highly tuition dependent for the foreseeable future in a marketplace that is becoming increasingly challenging. The college’s past success in attracting prospective student interest has sharpened the competitive efforts from neighboring colleges, and reinforced the call for a definitive marketing plan and enhanced marketing clarity at Colby-Sawyer. The new president will need to guide the college’s efforts to market the school’s distinctive strengths through a well organized admissions and enrollment management program.
Visible Leadership and Creative Management – Whether on the campus or in the extended community, the president’s leadership profile must be warm, genuine, engaging, and highly visible. The intimacy and authenticity of this college community makes meaningful presidential participation in ongoing conversations, general activities, and special events a necessary component of this assignment. Moreover, the president’s leadership style must be supplemented by her/his management ability. Colby-Sawyer has long depended on the generous commitment of faculty and staff to achieve its student-centered mission of personal development and accomplishment. Maintaining the vital contributions of Colby-Sawyer’s human resource remains a significant presidential responsibility. The sense of “teamwork” is incredibly strong on this campus. In the face of modest fiscal resources, creative management and visible leadership will be necessary to sustain the high degree of professional involvement and satisfaction that exists at Colby-Sawyer.

Promoting Diversity – There is widespread agreement that steps be considered to enhance the diversity of educational experiences in the academic program and the profile of the Colby-Sawyer community, thereby enriching the quality of campus life. A greater blend of socio-economic, geographic, ethnic, spiritual, and international backgrounds will help to enliven the learning environment and secure the desired goals in the coming years. As a function of overall planning, realistic objectives will require the attention of a new president. Currently 3.5 percent of the student body is minority and international students, and 95 percent have graduated from high schools in New England.

While other agenda items will present themselves as the college continues to evolve, these are believed to be among the most important as the new president comes to office.

**DESIRED ATTRIBUTES OF COLBY-SAWYER’S NEXT PRESIDENT**

The agenda for leadership requires certain qualities and experiences in the candidate who will be successful as Colby-Sawyer’s next president. Personal characteristics of warmth, integrity, and authenticity will be necessary, as will a high energy level, an engaging personal manner, and an uncompromised work ethic. Other specific attributes and experiences will be critical. The successful Colby-Sawyer president will be:

- A person of intellectual and emotional commitment, able to demonstrate her/his genuine interest in the college’s people and programs;
- A skilled fundraiser, able to develop an active philanthropic culture;
- A strategic thinker and planner, with abilities to conceptualize and implement institutional priorities;
- A person comfortable and effective in a widely consultative community, yet prepared to be decisive and make timely decisions when necessary;
- An accomplished communicator, combining refined listening skills with abilities to effectively transmit thoughts and ideas;
• A person with the ability to understand the various interests of faculty, staff, students, trustees, alumni, and community members, and to integrate the inherent differences into a mosaic of congeniality and cooperation;
• A visible leader, actively enjoying the life of the campus, eagerly participating in the external community, and professionally involved in national issues of higher education;
• A skilled administrator, successfully managing by objective and instinct;
• A person who will nurture the people of Colby-Sawyer;
• A person who understands the essential qualities of the academy as a learning community and who values and supports those qualities.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Presidential Search Committee will begin to review candidate materials in mid-November and applications will be received until the position is filled. The new president will assume office on or about July 1, 2006.

Dr. Thomas B. Courtice of Academic Search Consultation Service, Washington, DC, is assisting with the search. Nominators and prospective candidates may contact him at Tom.Courtice@academic-search.org or by phoning (614) 405-9209. Applications will include a letter of candidacy responding to the desired attributes for leadership, a resume, and the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses of five references, all of which will be received in full confidence. All applications should be submitted electronically to: Colby-Sawyer@academic-search.org.

Colby-Sawyer College Actively Encourages Diversity Among Students, Faculty, and Staff