



# The Search for a President Wilmington College

WILMINGTON, OHIO

## Mission Statement (excerpt)

"The [mission](#) of Wilmington College is to educate, inspire, and prepare each student for a life of service and success."

## Core Values

- Community
- Respect for All Persons
- Integrity
- Excellence
- Peace and Social Justice
- Diversity
- Service and Civic Engagement

The Wilmington College Board of Trustees has announced the search for the College's nineteenth president, an appointment that will become effective in 2021 no later than July 1. The opportunity is made possible by Dr. James Reynolds' decision to accept another presidency after 13 successful years at Wilmington, four as Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) and nine as President. Dr. Erika Goodwin, VPAA, assumed the interim presidential role on July 1 and will continue until a new president is appointed.

The new Wilmington president will be expected to focus on future growth and financial stability, while inspiring the Wilmington College community. By encouraging academic entrepreneurship, effective collaboration, and leading the development of a new strategic plan which establishes academic, operational, and fiscal priorities, the next president will have uncommonly attractive opportunities for visionary leadership at Wilmington.



☞ Freshmen renew the tradition of signing the Campus Rock upon their arrival on campus.



☞ Students gain hands-on experience lobbying elected officials in Washington, D.C.

## About Wilmington College (WC)

Wilmington is an independent college with a reputation for providing “hands-on learning opportunities.” Founded in 1870 and still affiliated with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), WC hosts 1,111 students this year on its main campus and another 120 at its branch campus in Cincinnati. Primarily a residential campus, the College’s main campus in Wilmington, Ohio (pop 12,400) is within an hour drive of three major metropolitan areas: Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

A constant characteristic throughout the College’s 150-year history has been the transformative nature of the Wilmington College experience. Students gain the invaluable perspective of a career-oriented, liberal arts-centered education. Graduates typically are well-rounded individuals with marketable skills who can think critically and live fulfilling lives.

Wilmington currently offers Bachelor of Arts (A.B.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees. A Master of Science in Athletic Training will begin in the fall of 2021, while graduate programs in Occupational Therapy and Business are also being developed. The curriculum is spread over nine academic areas, each headed by an Area Coordinator, a position similar to a Department Chair or Division Chair in other institutions.

## ACADEMIC AREAS

- Agriculture, Equine Business Management
- Art, Communication Arts, Theatre, Music
- Business Administration, Economics, Accounting
- Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics
- Education
- English, History, Religion & Philosophy, Modern Language
- Sports Management, Exercise Science, Coaching, Athletic Training (MSAT), Occupational Therapy

- Political Science, Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Criminal Justice
- Cincinnati Branch Campus

The College has 10-year continuing accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) through 2024. Specific areas with regional or national accreditation include: Athletic Training—the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE); Teacher Education—Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP); and Sport Management—Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA).

Throughout its history, Wilmington College has been known for producing quality teachers; WC alumni are prominent throughout Ohio’s school systems. The College offers one of only three undergraduate programs in agriculture in the state and the only one by a private institution. This popular program is consistently acclaimed for its distinctive quality. With one of the largest accredited athletic training programs in the state, senior classes regularly exceed the national average first-attempt pass rate on the National Board of Certification exam. With the establishment of the Master of Science in Athletic Training, the undergraduate course of study is now pre-athletic training under the exercise science major.

Numerous internship and research opportunities are available. A number of students take advantage of study abroad with a focus on international cultures manifested through the Global Awareness program required of all freshmen and seniors. Each fall, the College hosts the Westheimer Peace Symposium, which explores vital world issues relating to peace, nonviolence, social justice, and the environment.



## FACULTY

A talented and caring faculty engage personally with students in and out of the classroom. With a student/faculty ratio of 18:1 and class sizes averaging about 20 students, WC provides an intimate, highly effective learning environment. Roughly two-thirds of the 61 full-time faculty members have attained the highest degree in their field. All are dedicated to teaching with notable examples of individual faculty scholarship that also enrich students' learning experiences. Faculty are consistently accessible, responding to students' curricular, co-curricular, and personal needs. Faculty conduct business according to a Quaker business practice, convening as a committee of the whole rather than using a Faculty Senate model and making decisions through a consensus process. The College uses forms of the consensus model in most of its other deliberations as well.



## STAFF

The College's dedicated administration and staff place a high priority on student life. At a small college like WC, which prides itself on offering personal attention, students can accomplish the details associated with registration, educational funding, payments, and other business-related tasks through a One Stop Student Service Center that seeks to accomplish student needs in a single visit. WC provides a professionally-staffed Student Resource Center and a Career Services department whose goals are to develop leadership skills and to support students' academic experience.



 Top: Agriculture is the College's most popular major. Middle: Dr. Angela Mitchell interacts with students in her business statistics class. Bottom: Dr. Savitha Krishna works with a student in her biology lab.

## STUDENTS

In the fall of 2019, the College enrolled 1,111 students at its main campus and another 120 in its Cincinnati program. The entering class on the main campus consisted of 400 freshmen and transfer students who had a cumulative 3.42 grade point average from high school or previous colleges, including 55 students who earned a perfect 4.0 GPA. The entering class came from 14 states and six countries. Fifty-six students were designated as legacies, whose parent, grandparent, or sibling previously attended Wilmington. Most of WC's students come from southwestern Ohio in the geographic triangle linking Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus.

Wilmington students are engaged in service on campus and within the Wilmington community, as well as through national and international initiatives. WC has a history of serving others in numerous ways. Examples include: home-building projects through Habitat for Humanity and Tiny Homes Detroit; joining Hurricane relief trips; working with Native American populations; and teaching and assisting students in various countries. Annually, students average nearly 10,000 hours of voluntary service and have logged as many as 20,000 in a given year.

WC embraces the concept of the student-athlete as a major component of the overall educational experience; typically more than 40 percent of students are engaged in intercollegiate athletics. In the early 1990s, Wilmington moved from the NAIA into NCAA Division III. Today, students are engaged in 21 varsity sports, including an equestrian team, cheerleading squad, and several club sports. The 2004 women's basketball team won the Division III National Championship. Additionally, seven individuals from wrestling and track and field have been crowned national champions. The men's basketball team won the Ohio Athletic Conference Tournament in both 2010 and 2014 and qualified for the NCAA Tournament.

The newest intercollegiate opportunities for students are men's lacrosse (established in 2013) and the return of wrestling (2018).

## FACILITIES

The 80-acre main campus offers a mix of venerable historic buildings with modern facilities along with recent additions. Indeed, the administration building, College Hall, predates the founding of the institution in 1870. That facility and many others have been renovated and modernized over the years while retaining much of the charm to be found in well-maintained historic structures. Between 2014 and 2017, the College engaged in the largest concurrent building projects in more than 50 years.

## Quick Facts

- ☞ Founded in 1870
- ☞ Students from 14 states and 6 countries
- ☞ 20 intercollegiate sports
- ☞ 36 religious denominations
- ☞ 69% residential students
- ☞ 74 majors and concentrations
- ☞ 17,505 living alumni in 50 states and 39 countries
- ☞ Multiple global education immersion courses in global issues with opportunities for international study tours



## Those projects included:

**Center for Sport Sciences**—The nearly 41,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility houses the Athletic Training academic program in addition to four independent private health care businesses, including orthopedic service, physical therapy, and chiropractic care, as well as hospital medical imaging and outpatient services. This innovative and distinctive center was opened in 2016 and serves the Wilmington community while providing academic internships for our students.

**Center for Sciences and Agriculture**—This 45,000+ square foot teaching facility was expanded and completely renovated in 2016.

**Bailey Hall**—One of the College's historic buildings (9,300 sq. ft.), this building was completely renovated in 2015 and houses updated and expanded classroom and office spaces.

**Campus Master Plan**—During 2019, Wilmington College undertook a comprehensive review of its entire campus, developing and approving a Campus Master Plan. This plan is in the process of being further refined with detail costs to help the prioritization of projects over the course of the next several years.

The College expects to receive a \$13.5 million estate gift that is restricted to capital projects and scholarships. A portion has been earmarked for the renovation of campus residence halls to ensure they meet the needs of the students of today and tomorrow. This gift will enable the College to move forward with important elements of the Campus Master Plan on an earlier schedule.

 Top: Center for Sport Sciences. Middle: Center for the Sciences and Agriculture. Bottom: Equine Center. Below: Wilmington College Cincinnati campus.

The College owns several area farms totaling nearly 1,300 acres, including a 150-acre instructional farm for WC's agriculture and equine studies programs. Featured as part of that acreage is the Equine Center, a horse barn and arena that is utilized by students majoring in equine business management and competing on the intercollegiate equestrian team. Frank Hazard Arboretum, which is part of the contiguous main campus, provides 13.4 acres of unique trees and shrubs all complimented by the adjacent 19-acre S. Fredrik Anliot Natural Area along Lytle Creek.

## EXTERNAL PROGRAMS

In 1986, WC entered the Cincinnati educational market with one of the first adult-learner programs in the area. More than 1,600 students have graduated from Cincinnati branch locations during the past 34 years. In 2003, Cincinnati

State Technical and Community College invited Wilmington to establish a bachelor's degree completion program to provide a seamless transition from the associate degree to Bachelor of Arts degrees in several areas, allowing Cincinnati State graduates to earn their bachelor's degrees from Wilmington College in a familiar and convenient setting. In 2007, the College merged two branch campuses at a new, modern location in Blue Ash, a northern suburb of Cincinnati. The success of WC's program at Cincinnati State lent itself to consolidating the entire Cincinnati operation to that single location beginning in 2020. Classes at the Blue Ash branch concluded in 2019.

- € 45 miles to Dayton, Ohio
- € 50 miles to Cincinnati, Ohio
- € 65 miles to Columbus, Ohio



## The Agenda for New Presidential Leadership

At a time of unprecedented change in higher education, Wilmington College acknowledges the challenges it faces and, at the same time, identifies the unique strengths it offers future students. The opportunity to bring ingenuity and strength to Wilmington's presidency is matched by the College's desire to build a fresh and sustainable vision for its future.

All colleges and universities are struggling with decisions about how to handle the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning in March 2020, Wilmington transitioned to a successful online teaching and learning experience for students at both the Wilmington and Cincinnati locations. Plans are now underway to open the campuses for all curricular and co-curricular activity this fall, but decisions regarding that opening await further information on a regional and national basis. In the meantime, the longer-term agenda for the new president remains clear and includes:

### TRANSITIONING TO A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2015, Wilmington crafted a broad-based [strategic plan](#) that set the direction for strengthening enrollments, academic programming, finances, and philanthropic outreach. That 2015 Plan expires in 2022 and will enable new presidential leadership to begin the development and implementation of a new plan shortly after their arrival. Moreover, Wilmington will have an interim visit from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in 2024 and the Commission will expect to see the culture of planning at Wilmington extended under a new president.

In the meantime, the interim president and the interim VPAA are planning a year-long, program-by-program analysis beginning this summer. The results of this review will help to identify more clearly those program areas that

are contributing to the fiscal health of the College and those that need further scrutiny. The evaluation will support the next strategic plan by building on strengths and looking creatively at possible new developments in the future.

Wilmington College presents the new president with a critical opportunity to analyze the College's current and future priorities, develop a meaningful strategic plan for the future, implement initiatives that will enhance WC's growth, and strengthen its academic profile for future undergraduate and graduate students. It will be expected that transparency, collaboration, and creativity will be key ingredients in enabling successful outcomes of this highly anticipated planning process.

### ENHANCING ENROLLMENT OUTCOMES

WC's most recent enrollment trend has been encouraging. During the past two years, net student revenues on the main campus were \$19.6M, until COVID-19 forced refunds of room and board in the spring of 2020. These figures represented a significant increase over the previous ten-year average of \$18.2M and resulted from a solid increase in new student enrollments and careful financial aid management.

As mentioned earlier, the College will be initiating a comprehensive academic and administrative program assessment in the coming year. The introduction of the newly created Occupational Therapy program is expected to add students. Finally, some portion of the recent \$13.5M estate gift will enable the College to invest immediately in the enhancement of its enrollment objectives.

All of this reinforces the need for Wilmington's next president to bring skills in analyzing and managing sophisticated enrollment and financial aid variables, all designed for maximizing continued positive results. Strong planning will also help to refine targets for admissions, retention, and pricing strategies, while also evaluating Wilmington's market position, reputation, and brand.



## ENRICHING THE COLLEGE'S PHILANTHROPIC CULTURE

Wilmington's overall welfare will be enhanced by aggressively pursuing a comprehensive capital campaign in the very near future. It is anticipated that the Board of Trustees will determine the timeline and the size of that campaign at their meeting in July 2020. Future opportunities include program investment through:

1. Endowing faculty positions, funds for academic innovations, expansion of technological capabilities, and faculty/student research
2. Investing in student success through endowed scholarships, residence hall upgrades, expansion of internships, and funding for additional international experiences
3. Increasing unrestricted annual fund giving
4. Providing additional unrestricted endowment for WC's future

The new president must be engaged as the chief fundraiser for Wilmington College. Communicating the WC story, engaging external constituencies, setting advancement expectations, and using the strategic plan to establish fundraising priorities will all require presidential

leadership. The new president should expect to be judged, in part, on reasonable expectations and significant outcomes in this area.

## ACHIEVING FINANCIAL EQUILIBRIUM

Wilmington operates with an annual budget of \$25M and a current endowment investment of \$30M. No other single agenda item for WC's overall success is as critical as the need to achieve sustainable financial equilibrium. With the successes of the last capital campaign and increases in annual enrollment, removal of the accumulated deficit was targeted for the coming year, 2020–2021. While the current pandemic has thrown projections for spending and revenue into some confusion, planning strategies that will emphasize growth and new academic initiatives continue to be necessary. The College holds short-term invested reserves of \$6.5M, pooled long-term endowment assets of \$21M, long-term debt of \$21M, total assets of \$107M, and net assets of \$61M.

As a result of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the College received \$2.3M in PPP monies and \$5.7M in CARES relief monies which are being used to offset pandemic-related expenses.

While making progress in the last five years, considerable financial restraint has been practiced and lean operations have been the norm. Individual program budgets have been reduced and increases postponed, and some vacant positions have gone unfilled. An important goal of financial stability will be the ability to plan for salary increases while eliminating the remaining deficit. As the process of balancing and maintaining the budget unfolds, these and other operational issues at Wilmington must be addressed as financial stability is achieved.

The new Wilmington president will have the opportunity to strengthen WC's financial equilibrium as future institutional priorities, possible new revenue streams, new budget models, and ongoing enrollment and fundraising initiatives are considered.

### **SUPPORTING THE QUAKER TRADITION**

Wilmington's heritage with the Religious Society of Friends provides the grounding for a contemporary, values-centered campus ethos. While the new president is not required to be a Quaker, they will be asked to appreciate and support WC's commitment to the essence of Quaker higher education—encouraging free inquiry among diverse perspectives, respecting the process of collaboration and consensus, and promoting social justice and leadership through service. These values are a priority throughout the Wilmington College family.

### **NURTURING GOOD GOVERNANCE**

Due to the austerity practiced in recent years, it is increasingly important that the communication among and between WC constituencies be as transparent as possible. Given the quality of its people and programs, Wilmington College will benefit from presidential leadership that can nurture an affirming understanding of governance and thereby influence a culture of celebration around the College's strengths, initiatives, and future growth.

As mentioned earlier, the faculty is organized around its Area Coordinators and the Faculty Conveners who, through a strong relationship with the VPAA, provide a healthy model of campus governance. The staff is represented by a Staff Council.

The Board of Trustees' current membership is 22. Maximum trustee membership totals 33 with a minimum of 13, a majority of whom must be members of the Religious Society of Friends. Trustees' terms are four years with a maximum of three consecutive terms. Partnering with the current board chair, whose term expires in June 2021, and a new board chair who will assume duties at that time, the new president will have an opportunity to continue nurturing an effective governance system at Wilmington. The respect and trust that grows from exercising thoughtful governance procedures will enable new presidential leadership to build consensus around Wilmington's next strategic plan and sustain understanding and trust between all Wilmington stakeholders.

### **EMPOWERING AN EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM**

The new president can lead the existing team by sustaining a management style that draws this team into open and collaborative discussion about all issues impacting the College's welfare. Equally important will be the president's skill at delegating, empowering, evaluating, and holding accountable the members of this cabinet. As the president enables an effective management approach with the leadership team and with those for whom the team is responsible, future institutional accomplishments may be accelerated and celebrated.

### **DEMONSTRATING DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE**

Leadership will demonstrate a commitment to diversity in all its forms throughout the entire college community. Such commitment will engage all of Wilmington's constituencies around

issues of inclusion as it pertains to race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, and cultural pluralism. The commitment to diversity is deeply rooted in the College's Quaker values.

### CELEBRATING COMMUNITY ON OUR CAMPUSES

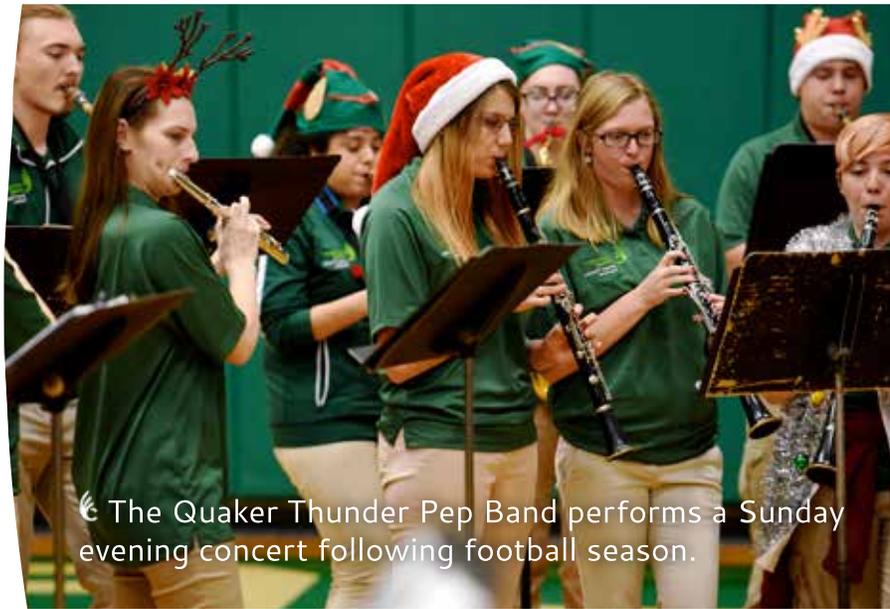
Students have historically been the focal point of the Wilmington College experience. Presidential leadership must be able to embrace the welfare of the student body, recognizing that student development occurs in and out of the classroom, formally and informally, and with all groups that make up the campus community. A new president must be comfortable providing visibility, accessibility, and genuine involvement in the life of the College with students, staff, and faculty on both the main campus and the branch campus. New leadership must be forthright and able to communicate with authenticity and clarity.

### STRENGTHENING TOWN/GOWN RELATIONSHIPS

In an effort to extend Wilmington's influence and visibility, the president will need to be comfortable communicating in the public arena about the College's distinctive features and the value of a Wilmington education. Important relationships can be further strengthened by the president's engagement in the city of Wilmington and nearby metropolitan centers of Columbus, Dayton, and particularly Cincinnati relative to the programs at the College's branch campus. WC's presence across the region deserves the new president's attention through possible collaborations and partnerships with schools and colleges, businesses, athletic enterprises, health care organizations, agriculture firms, and other institutions, all of which can bring reciprocal benefits to the College.



☞ Zac Chucta moves the ball past an Ohio Northern player in 2019 lacrosse action.



☞ The Quaker Thunder Pep Band performs a Sunday evening concert following football season.



☞ WC Theatre's fall 2019 presentation of *Heathers, the Musical* delighted audiences during the show's three-night run.

## Desired Presidential Attributes

The next Wilmington College president will bring a commitment to career-oriented, liberal arts-centered education, excellent teaching, and academic entrepreneurship. Leadership qualities and professional accomplishments that correspond to Wilmington's presidential agenda will be critical, as will integrity, high energy, a demonstrable work ethic, and a sense of humor. While there can be many pathways to the Wilmington presidency, achievements that reflect an understanding of 21st century higher education and credentials that mirror a solid academic background are crucial.

The successful Wilmington president will be:

- A visionary leader and strategic thinker, whose creative outlook will help to grow and strengthen Wilmington College and inspire others to engage in that effort;
- An effective fundraiser, able to enrich Wilmington's philanthropic culture and generate increased contributed resources;
- A person with a sophisticated understanding of successful enrollment management at both the undergraduate and graduate levels;

- A person of fiscal acumen, who can match WC's aspirations with its resources and establish institutional financial equilibrium;
- An authentic communicator, whose accomplishments include strong listening skills and who will engage the WC community in thoughtful discourse about its future;
- An individual who will understand and appreciate the impact of Quaker values on the life of the College;
- A person of intercultural competence and global perspective, committed to cultural pluralism with an ability to support diversity and inclusiveness throughout the Wilmington community;
- An astute manager, who can further develop an integrated senior team and successfully empower staff and faculty at all levels;
- A student of higher education, who understands and is open to change, is knowledgeable about the best practices in private college governance, the needs of 21st century learners, national patterns of new academic program development, the substantial presence of campus activity in environmental sustainability, and the significant use of educational technology;
- A person who demonstrates an enthusiastic campus presence at both the Wilmington and Cincinnati locations, who engages students, staff, and faculty while modeling traits that will strengthen collegiality, who reinforces a culture of celebration at WC; and,
- A person who recognizes the value of their external engagement with WC's alumni, parents, organizational partners, and friends in the larger community.



Students traverse the banner-lined sidewalk on a snowy winter morning.

## The Application Process

The Wilmington College Search Committee will be accepting nominations and evaluating applications on a rolling basis throughout the summer and will begin to narrow the candidate pool in mid-September. Although applications will be accepted until the time that a new president is selected, candidates should submit materials by noon on Tuesday, September 8 for the most favorable consideration. Final selection will be made in late October and the new president will be invited to begin work as soon as possible in 2021 but no later than July 1. Dr. Thomas B. Courtice is assisting with this search. Nominators and prospective candidates may contact him in full confidence at: 614.395.6631 or at [tom.courtice@tbcsearchconsulting.com](mailto:tom.courtice@tbcsearchconsulting.com).

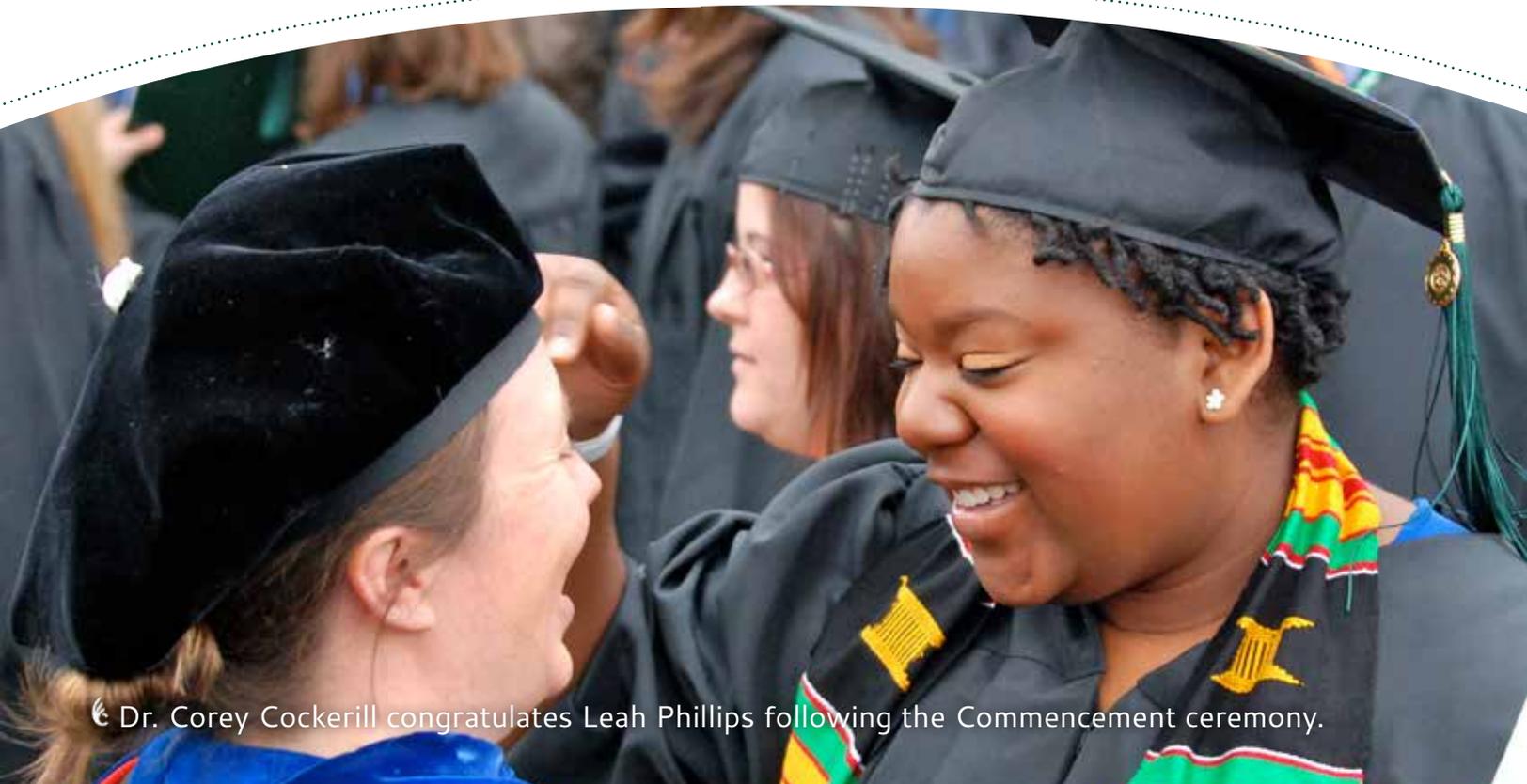
**Applications should be addressed to the Search Committee Chair:**

Richard Sidwell  
Chair of the Presidential Search Committee  
[WC\\_Pres@tbcsearchconsulting.com](mailto:WC_Pres@tbcsearchconsulting.com)

## Application materials should include:

1. a letter of candidacy that responds to The Agenda for New Presidential Leadership presented in this document,
2. a complete CV or resume, and
3. the names and contact information (phone and email) for three references, none of whom will be contacted until later in the search nor without permission of the candidate

*Wilmington College is an Equal Opportunity Employer which encourages and actively seeks applications from minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. Wilmington College does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability in the administration of education policies, admission policies, financial aid, employment or any other College program or activity.*



Dr. Corey Cockerill congratulates Leah Phillips following the Commencement ceremony.