

ST. OLAF COLLEGE
FOUNDING DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR VOCATION AND CAREER
Northfield, Minnesota

St. Olaf College, a highly selective, private, national liberal arts college in the Lutheran tradition 45 minutes by car or commuter coach from Minneapolis-St. Paul, seeks a founding Director for its new Center for Vocation and Career (“CVC”). The CVC will be successor to the College’s Center for Experiential Learning, established in 2000, which put St. Olaf in the vanguard among its peers in fostering collaboration between academic departments and career services staff.

The new name marks a change in emphasis while signaling the College’s ongoing commitment to be an innovator for liberal arts higher education. It more clearly establishes the CVC as the College office charged with providing students resources and experiences to build their skills awareness, guide their career planning and hone their self-advocacy. It also reiterates St. Olaf’s longstanding interest, as a college of the Lutheran church, in helping students to discern their “vocation,” an objective that is consonant with the College’s liberal arts curriculum.

Reporting directly to the President, the founding Director of the CVC will lead a staff of seven, working out of a new, purpose-built Center directly adjacent to the President’s Office in Tomson Hall (2011). This building also houses the College’s Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, the Provost, the Office of International and Off-Campus Studies, the Academic Support Center, classrooms and faculty offices. No liberal arts college has more concretely affirmed the centrality of career services to its institutional identity and mission.

The founding Director will provide leadership in realizing the broad directives of the College’s Main Street Initiative (2011), which determined that “‘preparation for life after college’ means having a map for the future that derives from students’ discernment of their gifts, talents and passions; that has realistic ‘next steps’; that enables new graduates to support themselves; and that can respond to their evolving interests, strengths and life situations as the decades pass.” The Director will recommend and institute a new organizational structure that will enable the CVC to deliver programming to serve the entire St. Olaf student body in a comprehensive, intentional, integrative way over each student’s four years of college. The Director will also help inculcate appreciation for the full range of careers where students might realize their determination to serve their communities and the world. The Director will work closely with a faculty that makes student advising a high priority and that has a long record of support for experiential education. The Director will gain, through direct access to and regular consultation with the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, a particular knowledge of the wider St. Olaf

community and the resources it can bring to bear to aid students in their vocational discernment and career planning.

Founded by Norwegian immigrants in 1874, St. Olaf today enrolls 3,100 students from 35 countries and nearly all 50 states on its hilltop campus, with a student-faculty ratio of 12:1. The College has a national reputation in music (it awards the BM as well as the BA), the natural sciences, mathematics and English; it is unusual among liberal arts colleges in offering major study in all four of the fine arts. Its distinctive General Education program ensures breadth of study without an onerous distribution system. A parallel curricular path, the College's four "Conversations," inaugurated in 1981, provides integrated sequences of team-taught interdisciplinary seminars; admission to the Conversations is competitive. St. Olaf operates on a 4-1-4 calendar; the January term, Interim, allows students to undertake a single course of intensive study. St. Olaf was a pioneer in international study, with study abroad relationships extending back more than a century. Two-thirds of all St. Olaf students study abroad before graduating.

St. Olaf has had four Rhodes Scholars and 29 Goldwater Scholars since 1995. In 2011, nine St. Olaf seniors were named Fulbright Scholars, and the College placed third among its peers in current Peace Corps volunteers, with 24 alumni serving overseas. The College consistently ranks among the most successful institutions in preparing undergraduates for medical school; it also ranks highly in the number of its alumni who earn PhDs.

St. Olaf shares Northfield, Minnesota with Carleton College. Nearly equal numbers of faculty and staff of both institutions live locally or commute from the Twin Cities. Downtown Northfield has been restored to its nineteenth century appearance, with coffeehouses, restaurants, art galleries and the Archer House River Inn (completely renovated in 2011). The 850-acre Cannon River Wilderness Area, with its hiking trails and campsites, lies just south of Northfield. The Northfield Lines Metroexpress provides motor coach transportation between Carleton, St. Olaf and multiple Twin Cities stops, including Bloomington (MSP Airport), the University of Minnesota, St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas.

Qualifications: Applications from individuals with experience in higher education, commercial or social enterprise and professional services are equally welcome. A bachelor's degree in an arts-and-sciences discipline and a master's degree in a relevant field are preferred credentials. A minimum of five years as a manager is required, preferably involving professional engagement with liberal arts students or recent college graduates. The successful candidate may have experience in undergraduate career services and particular expertise in employer relations, but the search committee also wishes to consider other profiles, e. g., in university recruiting, executive education or management training. All candidates should demonstrate professional experience that would enable them to provide effective leadership for the Center and credible liaison with St. Olaf students, faculty, alumni and parents, as well as employers and graduate and professional school contacts.

Familiarity with emerging practices in career development, demonstrated skill in staff supervision, budget management, strategic planning, assessment and learning outcomes and career-services technology are desired. The ability to collaborate with faculty and staff working in all areas of the College's operation is essential. The successful candidate will be adept at integrating curricular and co-curricular programs, agile in adapting to new developments both at St. Olaf and in employment and other post-graduate opportunities for students. He or she will be committed to achieving creditable, measurable results for St. Olaf students. The founding Director must be energetic, visionary, persistent, charismatic, persuasive and engaging.

Review of candidate materials will begin immediately and continue until the appointment. A complete application will include a letter of interest, a curriculum vitae or résumé and contact information for five professional referees who can speak about the candidate's qualifications for this position.

Expressions of interest, nominations and inquiries should be directed to St. Olaf's search consultant, Chuck O'Boyle of C. V. O'Boyle, LLC, at chuck@cvoboyle.com, who will furnish a detailed specification upon request.

St. Olaf College is an equal opportunity employer and follows a voluntary affirmative action policy in the recruitment and hiring of faculty and staff. The College admits students of any race, color, creed, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national and ethnic origin, sex, age, religion, disability, marital status, status with respect to public assistance or sexual orientation in administration of its educational policies, financial aid program, athletics and all other programs.