

OBERLIN

COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

Oberlin, Ohio

Seeks nominations and applications for:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Oberlin College and Conservatory (“Oberlin” or “the College”), the storied undergraduate institution 35 miles west of Cleveland, seeks a new Executive Director of the Career Development Center (“CDC”) who will collaborate closely with academic and student affairs divisions to provide field-leading innovation in liberal arts career development services.

OBERLIN COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

Founded in 1833, Oberlin College became an institution that fundamentally changed the accessibility of American higher education. In 1835, Oberlin became the first college in the US to admit African American students. The first class of women to earn baccalaureate degrees was admitted in 1837. In addition, the first black woman to earn a BA from an American college graduated from Oberlin in 1862. This commitment to social justice and using knowledge to make the world a better place for everyone still permeates Oberlin’s ethos. [Social justice, diversity, equity, access, and inclusivity](#) remain central to the College’s [mission](#). As an institution, Oberlin is committed to academic excellence and a deeply [engaged](#) and [interconnected](#) educational experience.

An exemplar of undergraduate access, intellectual and artistic rigor, and critical thinking, today’s Oberlin uniquely combines an outstanding professional school of music and a leading undergraduate [College of Arts and Sciences](#) with a nationally distinguished library system and one of the great college or university art museums in the country. The [Oberlin Conservatory of Music](#) provides flexible programs to prepare students as professional musicians and teachers of music. The College of Arts and Sciences offers a rich and balanced curriculum in the humanities, practicing arts, social sciences, mathematics, and natural sciences. Within that framework, Oberlin expects that its 2,875 students will work closely with the faculty to design an educational program appropriate to their own particular interests, needs, and long-term goals.

ABOUT “OBIES”

Commonly referred to as “Obies,” Oberlin students are among the most talented in the world, with the average high school GPA of the entering class at 3.66. Fifty-nine percent of Obies are women, and 28 percent identify as students of color. The class of 2024 hails from 44 states and 41 countries. Intellectually curious and committed to servant leadership, 75 percent of Obies engage in international or domestic service experiences during their time as students. Passionate about a range of academic topics, Obies are also empowered to share their knowledge by

teaching through [ExCo](#). Top career areas for Oberlin alumni are higher education, health care, business and finance, legal professions, and the arts.

OBERLIN FACULTY AND STAFF

Oberlin faculty is composed of 338 active researchers who are among the foremost authorities in their fields. *U.S. News & World Report* recognized Oberlin faculty for their commitment to undergraduate teaching in *Best Colleges 2019* guide; Oberlin ranked 16th in the nation among liberal arts colleges. Small class sizes augment the faculty's ability to connect with students. Seventy percent of classes have fewer than 20 students; the student-to-faculty ratio is 11:1 in the College of Arts & Sciences and 7:1 in the Conservatory of Music. In addition to faculty, over 380 administrative and professional staff play a critical role in maintaining Oberlin's institutional excellence.

OBERLIN ALUMNI

Some 40,000 graduates and former students strong, Oberlin alumni form a highly engaged community that is a critical resource in supporting the institution's academic, athletic, and artistic excellence. Continually seeking opportunities to connect with their alma mater, Oberlin alumni volunteer as mentors, capital campaign stewards, internship sponsors, and employment leads. In addition, Oberlin alumni are leaders who go on to exceptional careers that have been recognized by a range of industry awards and designations including Pulitzer Prizes Grammys, Emmys, and diplomatic and legislative appointments.

OBERLIN LEADERSHIP

[Carmen Twillie Ambar](#) became Oberlin's 15th president in 2017 and the College's first African American president in its 184-year history. She joined Oberlin after serving as president for nine years at Cedar Crest College in Pennsylvania. Prior to Cedar Crest, President Ambar's many accomplishments included deanships at Rutgers University (she became the youngest dean in the university's history) and Princeton, as well as serving as a practicing attorney in the New York City Law Department.

Early on at Oberlin, President Ambar emphasized engaging Oberlin's distinctive liberal arts education with the wider world. Early initiatives have included enhancing winter term, promoting internships and study abroad, building career communities, and creating hands-on opportunities for students. To ensure Oberlin's future as a leading liberal arts college and conservatory, President Ambar and the Board of Trustees began a full-spectrum examination of the institution. The findings culminated in a report now known as [One Oberlin](#). Rooted in Oberlin's values and led by some of the wisest and most committed faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and students, the process aims to offer long-term strategies for reallocation and growth.

ABOUT THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Enhancement of the CDC to be a true partner with academic affairs, alumni and parent relations, and admissions in creating an integrated campus experience is now among Oberlin's top co-curricular financial and strategic priorities. Major new endowment support for the CDC will be a notable portion of Oberlin's upcoming capital campaign, with significant additional resources during the bridge period now earmarked for the CDC in the College's budget projections. The CDC will continue its deep collaboration with Oberlin's College of Arts & Sciences and Conservatory of Music to develop and showcase the achievements of Oberlin students and alumni from every academic major; will equip faculty members and professional staff to provide encouragement

and guidance to students as they begin their post-graduation visioning and discernment; will enrich and expand the Career Communities framework established during the 2018-19 academic year; and will encourage students to broaden their career exploration beyond the professions that have historically been the aspiration of a high percentage of Oberlin matriculants (the academy, law, medicine, and musical performance). The new Executive Director will also be called upon to cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit that is already characteristic of Oberlin students into greater capacity and career readiness upon graduation.

ABOUT THE ROLE

Reporting to the Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students and in close collaboration with the chief academic officers of the College and Conservatory, the Executive Director of the CDC will assume an integral and visible role in the education of Oberlin students, while creating new opportunities and structures for alumni and parent involvement in campus life. The Executive Director will expand the CDC team through hiring additional professionals (with further expansion contemplated). The new Executive Director will be an important liaison to the Conservatory's Office of Professional Development, a separate operation advising on careers for professional musicians.

The new Executive Director will be able to harness already established faculty interest in a high-functioning career services operation and an openness to fresh approaches during a transformational moment in Oberlin's history. Academic departments are eager for greater cooperation in developing department-specific career exploration and post-graduation data that present a clear picture of the rich diversity of career paths in each major.

The new Executive Director will benefit from the technological and programmatic improvements that a succession of forward-looking recent leaders brought to the CDC's operations. Signature initiatives include the [Ashby Business Scholars](#) program (now in its tenth year); [summer internship funding](#); and [career communities](#). External to but closely engaged with the CDC, are Oberlin's signature Arts and Sciences [Peer Advising Leaders](#) ("PAL") program for first-year students and the new [Sophomore Opportunities and Academic Resources](#) ("SOAR") programs that ensure a smooth transition to campus life and academics and help undergraduates make intentional progression through courses, academic major selection, and the pursuit of internship and employment opportunities. In 2020, Oberlin launched the highly successful [Junior Practicum Program](#) to meet the specific virtual education needs of juniors during Covid. Oberlin's entrepreneurship programming offers academic courses, project funding, guest lectures, and experiential learning opportunities. Oberlin participates in [Summer on the Cuyahoga](#) ("SOTC"), which brings together 60-80 students from partner institutions for an intensive summer immersion program designed to help interns explore the professional, civic, and social offerings of the Cleveland area. The new \$42 million [Hotel at Oberlin](#) provides overnight accommodations and conference facilities for the CDC that are unsurpassed on any American campus. Beginning in fall 2021, the Career Development Center will be housed within the new, centrally located Center for Engaged Liberal Arts, collaborating with other major experiential learning offices such as Undergraduate Research, Fellowships, Winter Term, Study Away, and the [Bonner Center for Community-Engaged Learning, Teaching, and Research](#).

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The new Executive Director of the Career Development Center will play a critical role in addressing the following opportunities and challenges:

Leading a Career Development Center that engages students in career exploration and preparation from the moment they arrive on campus. An expert at building successful and sustainable career preparation programs with measurable outcomes, the Executive Director will gather and evaluate data reflecting key performance indicators to ensure the CDC offerings effectively meet students' professional development needs across all areas of academic inquiry and at each stage of the college experience. The Executive Director will assess the current programs to enable the development and implementation of updated CDC practices and programming in anticipation of shifting national and international employment trends, while simultaneously ensuring that the CDC's efforts are true to Oberlin's social justice and liberal arts values and priorities. Furthermore, the Executive Director will be fluent in building [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) into career program development and delivery methods to foster preparedness for a range of student interactions with the CDC staff, alumni, parents, faculty, and prospective employers.

Engaging alumni, parents, faculty, and external partnerships to increase access to internship and career development opportunities. The Executive Director will partner with colleagues in Advancement and Alumni Relations to build and nurture a diverse corps of engaged volunteers and employers who will mentor students and young alumni as well as provide professional contacts. The Executive Director will also provide structure and frameworks to support alumni and parents hiring student interns, ensuring a positive experience for both constituencies. Skilled at building strong relationships with faculty, the Executive Director will facilitate deeper curricular alignment with CDC programming and opportunities. In addition, the Executive Director will develop multifaceted outreach and engagement strategies with potential employers from a wide range of sectors and geographies.

Shaping the Career Development Center's identity to increase awareness of the Center's and Oberlin's value proposition. Building upon the momentum of recent success, the Executive Director will market and communicate the CDC's ongoing culture of excellence and promote the CDC's visibility within and beyond the Oberlin campus. She/he/they will develop strategies to reach and serve populations with unique challenges (e.g. first-generation and international students). The Executive Director will also highlight CDC news, metrics, accomplishments and insights with current and prospective students, alumni, parents, faculty, and trustees to effectively communicate the Career Development Center's story and the alignment with and value of an Oberlin education. In addition, the Executive Director will foster and encourage ongoing dialogue between CDC staff and students, alumni, and faculty to dispel myths and raise awareness about the possibilities to align careers with personal and educational values.

Building strong relationships internally and externally attract additional professional and financial resources. The Executive Director will be an energetic, engaging and passionate leader who actively creates synergistic relationships with staff, students, parents, alumni, faculty, employers, trustees, and foundation and higher education leaders. A skilled collaborator, she/he/they will build key internal and external relationships to facilitate experiential learning opportunities for students to translate their classroom learning and personal passions into practical experience. The Executive Director will also engage alumni and other constituencies in fundraising efforts.

Mentoring, growing, and retaining the exceptional and committed staff within the Career Development Center. The Executive Director will oversee a growing staff of seven. Passionate about developing talent in others, the Executive Director will cultivate the skills of each individual staff member, building on their proficiencies and encouraging innovation. With a transparent and collaborative leadership style, the Director will encourage innovative thinking, personal accountability, and results-driven performance based upon clearly communicated staff goals and objectives. Fostering an environment of equity and inclusion, the Executive Director will attract and retain talented people from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences.

Qualifications:

Oberlin seeks an articulate, confident, resourceful, and self-directed individual who is a field-leading career development officer. Professional experience in university or college career services is highly desirable, along with an affinity for liberal education. A graduate degree is preferred.

Other expectations include:

- A minimum of five years of progressive professional experience, preferably involving undergraduates and/or recent graduates, as well as employers and/or alumni;
- A record of working effectively with persons from diverse backgrounds and initiating diversity, equity, and inclusion signature programming in career development;
- Ability to promote an inclusive campus and community culture;
- Demonstrated skill in fostering new institutional relationships;
- Experience marshaling professional and volunteer networks;
- Strong staff supervision and development skills;
- Budget management and strategic planning acumen;
- A high level of conversational sophistication, broad intellectual interests, and discretion;
- Ability to engage faculty, trustees, and senior administrators;
- Skill and enthusiasm to counsel and engage creative, diligent, professionally ambitious, and service-minded students;
- Capacity to cultivate and steward alumni and parent relationships;
- Facility with developing effective assessment methods and data analytics and articulating strategic priorities; and
- Capacity and appetite for fundraising.

Applications & Nominations

For best consideration, please send all inquiries, nominations, and applications – electronically and in confidence to:



Susan VanGilder, Managing Director
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institutional environment free from discrimination and harassment based on race, color, sex, marital status, religion, creed, national origin, disability, age, military or veteran status, sexual orientation, family relationship to an employee of Oberlin College & Conservatory, and gender identity and expression.