The Board of Trustees has begun a search for the 25th president of LaGrange College and encourages expressions of interest in this unusual opportunity for leadership. The search begins following 12 years of outstanding leadership by F. Stuart Gulley who has announced his resignation to accept the presidency of Woodward Academy in Atlanta. In succeeding Dr. Gulley, the next president has an opportunity to lead LaGrange to new levels of institutional achievement and distinction, in part by building on existing strengths and accomplishments. LaGrange has recently been named by U.S. News & World Report as a top ten “Southern Baccalaureate College” for the fifth consecutive year, as a “Best Value” college, and as an “Up and Coming school (that) ... everyone is watching.” A new president will be expected to accept this assignment on or about July 1, 2009 – an uncommonly opportune moment in the life of this fine United Methodist college.
ABOUT LAGRANGE COLLEGE

For more than 175 years, the LaGrange College mission has been to challenge students’ minds and inspire their souls. Founded in 1831 as a women’s academy, LaGrange is the oldest private college in Georgia. It has been co-educational since 1953. Throughout its history, the college has retained close ties with the United Methodist Church (UMC), and today LaGrange enjoys a distinguished reputation within the 120-member National Association of Schools and Colleges of the United Methodist Church (NASCUMC). Owned by the North Georgia Conference of the UMC, LaGrange is proud of its church affiliation, a relationship that helps to define the college’s commitment to the uninhibited pursuit of truth and freedom of expression for faculty, students, and all members of the LaGrange community.

THE PROGRAM – With degree programs firmly grounded in the liberal arts, LaGrange also offers a variety of pre-professional and professional opportunities through a day and evening schedule, both of which are fully accessible to traditional-aged and adult student learners. The Bachelor of Arts degree with 16 majors, the Bachelor of Science degree in six areas, the Bachelor of Music, and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree compose the undergraduate program. The Master of Arts in Teaching and the Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction are available at the graduate level.

Day classes are offered on the 4-1-4 calendar, and LaGrange is the only college in Georgia offering the flexibility of a “Jan Term.” The January Interim Term provides a month-long opportunity for intensive focus on innovative subject matter in a single course or the enrichment of study off-campus and/or abroad. Study in the Evening College’s quarter system is available to full- and part-time students, with classes offered throughout the week on the LaGrange campus; the Associate of Arts and Bachelor of Arts in Business or Human Development are available in the evening. On the Albany (GA) campus, the Bachelor and Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership degrees are available.

Within this framework, focused initiatives help to illustrate some of the distinctive qualities of the LaGrange academic experience:

- A growing commitment to sustainability, intended to integrate social, economic, and environmental issues into all areas of the college program. An interdisciplinary minor (Oikos), sponsored by four departments, explores ecological and social responsibility, and is one example of the LaGrange commitment to sustainability. Over the past several months, a “blue ribbon task force” has developed recommendations for further incorporating sustainability into additional areas of the college program.
- A widely respected offering in the arts encourages students in music, theatre, and art and design to expand their creativity through classroom study, in the studio, and on the stage. Superior facilities, including the Lamar Dodd Art Center, the Callaway Auditorium, and the Price and Black Box theaters, help to showcase this renowned portion of the college program.
- A comprehensive reinforcement of leadership through service, found in both curricular and co-curricular initiatives, has a profound influence on the character of the LaGrange educational experience. Implementing servant-leadership as a philosophy of an “inward journey with self to equip an outward journey of service to the world” enables students, faculty, and staff to actively nurture the LaGrange mission of challenging the mind and inspiring the soul on a consistent basis.
Overall, LaGrange’s 53 academic and pre-professional programs (www.lagrange.edu/academics/majors.htm) are implemented with great effectiveness. In assessing the learning environment and the engagement of students, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has scored LaGrange higher than the baccalaureate division averages and the national averages on all five NSSE benchmarks (www.lagrange.edu/about/FactsFigures/nssedata.htm).

LaGrange is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to award associate, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees. Teacher education programs are accredited by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, the nursing program by the National League for Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC), and the undergraduate program in business administration by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).

AN ENGAGED FACULTY – LaGrange College faculty members are committed to enhancing the learning environment of the college through their work as teachers, advisors, and mentors. In an extension of the classroom, faculty are involved with individual students on independent research projects, artistic interpretation, social service and civic projects, internships, and learning opportunities abroad. Regardless of the level of academic preparation of incoming students, faculty remain proudest of their impact on students’ learning outcomes and the changes students experience through their intellectual growth and personal development during their time at LaGrange.

More than 100 full-time and adjunct (15%) faculty members create an intensely intimate educational experience for students at LaGrange, where the faculty-to-student ratio is 1:10 and the average class size is 11. Of the full-time teaching faculty, approximately 84 percent hold the highest academic degree offered in their respective field and 63 percent have tenure. More than one-half of the LaGrange faculty has been hired since 1999, the result of both retirements and growth. All faculty continue to serve with a common commitment to the college’s overarching mission of teaching and service, and the more recently hired faculty have brought a heightened interest in individual scholarship and other professional activity.

STUDENT CENTERED PROGRAMMING - About 1,000 students are enrolled at LaGrange, representing 16 states and 9 countries, with more than half from the state of Georgia. A rich diversity distinguishes the student body in which 27 percent are from under-represented groups (22 percent African-American). Fifty-eight percent are women; 42 percent are men. Average high school GPA is 3.5 and SAT scores range from 950 to 1140 in the mid-fifty percentile range. Ninety percent of all students receive some form of financial assistance and more than $6 million is awarded annually.

Educating the “whole student” is vital to the overall objective of the college’s program. As a result, a robust co-curriculum and a comprehensive student-life program are integral to the LaGrange academic experience.

Largely a residential college, 82 percent of freshmen and 57 percent of all undergraduates live on the campus.
The fabric of the living-learning program is highlighted by an active Student Government Association, over 40 student clubs and organizations, active Greek and independent living arrangements, and the prominence of two character building initiatives:

- The Honor Code – LaGrange students’ significant recognition of personal integrity was underscored in 1999 by the establishment of an Honor Code. This code has become the responsibility of every student, faculty, and staff member at LaGrange and it is widely supported. Student members of the Honor Council seek to educate the community on principles of academic integrity and to enforce the Honor Code.

- The Social Code – Like the Honor Code, this code is the responsibility of all constituencies as it attempts to instill a sense of moral and community responsibility across the campus. Students on the Social Council are responsible for interpreting behavioral standards for students and for taking action when these policies are violated.

As a member of the NCAA Division III, LaGrange’s intercollegiate program offers growth opportunities through eight varsity sports for men and seven for women. Forty-two percent of undergraduates participate in varsity athletics. The Panthers are members of the Great South Athletic Conference, but as the only DIII football program in Georgia, the team (established in 2006) competes in the St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and this year won the conference championship. LaGrange student athletes have been named to Academic All-America teams in almost every sport. In 2010, women’s lacrosse will be introduced as a varsity sport. Facilities for intramural and varsity sports are excellent and include a new baseball complex, two new softball fields, a state-of-the-art training room, and indoor and outdoor swimming pools.

Reflecting its close affiliation with the UMC, LaGrange provides many opportunities to celebrate spiritual life. A full-time chaplain is a member of the president’s cabinet and serves as spiritual advisor to students, faculty, and staff, as well as director of the servant-leadership program. Religious life activities are available for every student regardless of their faith tradition, and the spiritual fabric of the campus community is vibrant.

A DISTINCTIVE PLACE – The sense of “place” for LaGrange, identified by its definition as a value-centered community, deserves a multi-faceted interpretation. Located about 65 miles southwest of Atlanta, this stunningly beautiful campus of over 125 acres is situated on the highest geographical point in the city of LaGrange. Today’s campus has little deferred maintenance and is sustained in immaculate fashion. The beauty of the surrounding region is also impressive, highlighted by West Point Lake, a 25,000 acre reservoir created by the Chattahoochee River, with 525 miles of shoreline.
At the heart of the campus renewal is the Frank and Laura Lewis Library, a LEED-certified building that is opening early in 2009. The new library’s expanded capacity will include new technologies with unlimited access to global digital sources, 24-hour spaces equipped specifically for undergraduate research, writing and tutorial centers, and greatly expanded collection space.

From a physical standpoint, the campus facilitates what is most important in the LaGrange College ethos. Within this setting, the sense of “a caring and ethical community” is palpable. Identified by the Templeton Foundation as a college that develops character, the campus community fosters relationships built on mutual respect, compassion, and civility, all of which are expressed among and between all constituent groups.

A discussion about the LaGrange community is not complete without including the historic city of LaGrange (pop. 30,000). The college has intentionally extended, through word and action, its expression of concern throughout the larger community. In return, it has been embraced by the people, activity, and resources of the region. Notable in this regard is the longstanding and historic support of the Callaway Foundation (LaGrange) and the Pitts Foundation (Atlanta), both of which have made a substantive difference in the strength of the LaGrange program. As a result of the college’s effort to take a leadership role in local social, economic, recreational, and cultural issues, few town/gown relationships are as healthy as those that exist at LaGrange.

Additional information about LaGrange people and programs may be found at www.lagrange.edu.

THE AGENDA FOR NEW LEADERSHIP

The next president will have an opportunity to lead LaGrange to new heights and even greater distinction. At a time in higher education when colleges aspire to claim a special niche, the LaGrange presidency offers a unique formula for success. The next president will be asked to steadfastly maintain the college’s core values, while building vigorously on the potential for future growth. The next president should be prepared to embrace this blend of institutional grounding and creative future, and to accept a dynamic agenda which includes the following:

LEADING THE CAMPUS CONVERSATION – The new president will accept responsibility for LaGrange College at a moment when the campus is eager to discuss its future. Institutional progress over the last decade provides an exciting platform for further exploration of the vision for LaGrange as the “premier liberal arts and sciences private college in Georgia” and the “brand” by which the public perceives the institution. Campus constituencies are eager for a new president to lead this discourse and to provide additional discovery for all parties involved. At the heart of this discussion is a leadership opportunity to help articulate creative ways for further relating the curriculum’s liberal arts foundation to its several strong professional curricula and for exploration of new program
possibilities. As an outgrowth of a recent “blue ribbon task force” on curriculum, the newly created “2010 Task Force” will provide a graceful introduction to these discussions in which a new president will participate and, ultimately, take the lead.

PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH AND EVALUATION – An obvious and timely extension of this campus conversation at LaGrange will be the systematic development of the college’s next five-year plan. With the expiration of the current plan in 2008-2009 and a SACS comprehensive visit scheduled for 2013-2014, the implementation of a new strategic planning process is crucial. The next president will be asked to oversee this effort to assess the current LaGrange program and its components, to weigh the consideration of possible new program initiatives, and to articulate precise financial parameters at the plan’s foundation.

MAINTAINING FISCAL EQUILIBRIUM – Significant dependence on tuition revenues and support from a modest endowment (currently at $45 M) require that the president provides strong financial stewardship for current operations as well as future plans. The college is committed to achieve and maintain a balanced annual operating budget ($30 M), and to adhere to sound business practices in all phases of its operation. The new president will be asked to evaluate and possibly adjust the current business model in order to improve the institution’s financial position.

ENRICHING THE RESOURCE BASE – Annual dependence on resources from tuition, fees, and gifts requires that the new president provide engaged leadership in all areas of resource development.

- Enabling Enrollment Management Programs – The recent appointment of new leadership for the admissions and financial aid program appears to be producing significant improvement in enrollment results. At the same time, plans for continued growth to 1,200 students and qualitative improvement in student profiles provide an ambitious roadmap. A third “blue ribbon task force” recently completed an analysis of retention issues in which approximately 70 percent of all freshmen currently return for their second year and 53 percent of LaGrange students graduate after five years. Presidential understanding and leadership for achieving successful outcomes in admission, financial aid, and retention will be critical to the future welfare of the college.

- Enhancing the Philanthropic Culture – The impressive impact of gift support on the LaGrange physical plant is evident in the beauty of new, renovated, and well-maintained buildings and campus grounds. The anticipated successful conclusion (December 2009) of the $65 million “Defining Moment” capital campaign has paved the way for future fundraising initiatives. While a new science facility remains high on the planning
agenda, the new president will also find a primary need for measurable endowment growth. It is expected that the president will serve as the college’s chief fundraiser and take a central role in enhancing the LaGrange College philanthropic culture.

MAINTAINING THE COMMUNITY – The sense of community at LaGrange is uncommonly strong. The caring and ethical manner with which all members of the college family interact with one another should be fostered by the new president’s intuitive ability to engage the campus in an authentic fashion. These personal and professional qualities will also be needed beyond the campus, where the college wants to sustain its leadership role and further nurture its partnership with the city of LaGrange and the region. This notion of community, reinforced on-campus and developed off-campus, is fundamental to the college’s identity.

MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES – The LaGrange president leads a senior administrative team that is currently very strong and performing at a high level, individually and collectively. With a search pending for a new academic vice president and the possibility of future retirements of others, the new president may be faced with rebuilding parts of this team in order to manage effectively an integrated program of academic, student, spiritual, financial, and external affairs. Identification of good-match talent when vacancies occur, delegation of appropriate administrative responsibilities, evaluation of professional performance, empowerment of senior leadership, and overseeing productive relationships between administrative units will be critical. Clarity of communication and consistency of process will lend strength to the administrative operations at LaGrange.

RAISING INSTITUTIONAL VISIBILITY – There is a sense on the campus that the distinctiveness of the LaGrange experience deserves greater recognition on a regional and national scale. To accomplish this, LaGrange’s president should be comfortable extending the college’s image, participating in public discussion regarding higher education issues, working within the political system to represent the college, and involving the college in professional associations that serve the institution’s interests. Faculty, students, and staff continue to do work of high quality that many feel deserves a more prominent place in the fabric of higher education. The next president can strengthen LaGrange’s recognition by promoting the institution’s good work and its timely accomplishments.

DESIRED ATTRIBUTES FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

The next LaGrange president will bring integrity in every aspect of his/her professional and personal life, high energy, a strong work ethic, and deep spiritual grounding. Experience that reflects a comprehensive understanding of the academy and strong academic credentials are also crucial. Beyond this, other specific skills and experiences will be important. The successful LaGrange president will be:

- A visionary leader, whose creative outlook will balance the foundation of the liberal arts with their practical application to areas of professional education;
- An enthusiastic advocate for the independent, residential, church-related college and the...
environment it supports;
• A person who can comfortably engage the LaGrange College community in thoughtful discourse about its future;
• A consensus builder, committed to collaboration yet able to make timely and sometimes difficult administrative decisions with compassion;
• A person with a commitment to cultural and ethnic diversity, who understands its importance to this college community;
• A strategic thinker, able to conceptualize, plan, and implement institutional priorities;
• An eager fundraiser, experienced in building a positive culture of philanthropy;
• A person who understands the fundamental value of the United Methodist/LaGrange relationship;
• A person knowledgeable about the major issues facing higher education, including enrollment management, accreditation, technology, and academic best practices;
• A visible leader, actively enjoying student perspectives and campus activities, participating in the local community, and favorably influencing LaGrange’s public reputation;
• A strong executive manager with a solid understanding of finance and personnel.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The LaGrange College search committee will begin reviewing application materials in January and will continue until late in February. Although application materials will be accepted until the time that a new president is selected, candidates should submit materials by February 24 for the most favorable consideration. The new president will be expected to begin work on or about July 1, 2009.

Dr. Thomas B. Courtice of Academic Search, Inc., is assisting with this search. Nominators or prospective candidates may contact him at tom.courtice@academic-search.com or at (614) 405-9209. Applications should include a letter of candidacy that responds to the agenda for new leadership at LaGrange and the desired attributes for a new president; a complete resume or vita; and the name and contact information (phone and e-mail) of three references, none of whom will be contacted without the formal permission of the candidate.

All applications will be considered in full confidence and should be submitted to LaGrangeCollege@academic-search.com.

LaGrange College does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race or color, or national or ethnic origin.