

January 30, 2024

Wilmington College Board of Trustees  
c/o Presidential Search Committee  
Wilmington College  
1870 Quaker Way  
Wilmington, OH 45177  
[presidentialelection@wilmington.edu](mailto:presidentialelection@wilmington.edu)

In Re: Wilmington College's Twentieth President Search

Greetings:

I am pleased to submit this letter of interest in the position of Wilmington College's twentieth President, along with my Curriculum Vitae and references. I believe that I have the qualifications and experience necessary to successfully fill this position. Specifically, as a member of the campus community for 16 years and currently serving (since April 1, 2023) as Interim President, I recognize and seek to help preserve the College's distinctive attributes and resonant core values. I also believe that I have the ability to serve our various campus constituencies and our external communities.

Wilmington College is a remarkable institution, responsive to the needs of our students and bold in our efforts to navigate the ever-changing and often challenging landscape of higher education, in ways that are consonant with and will advance our Mission. I believe that the College especially benefits from our committed trustees, faculty, and staff and from our truly talented students.

My experience has taught me that Wilmington College succeeds because *we meet students where they are*, whether on campus (in class, at the Farm, and in our many rich co-curricular offerings), online, in our national and international programs, at the workplace, or within the prison system. What drives our very successful hands-on and accessible approach is our vision: that we are a community of learners from diverse backgrounds and cultures, rooted in Quaker values, seeking transformative curricular and co-curricular experiences to prepare our graduates for a life of service, purpose, and success.

I have dedicated my interim presidency to making significant progress toward realizing that vision, and—importantly—toward achieving the necessary accreditation and financial stability to support and sustain it. I have also worked closely with the faculty, the staff, our students, and the Board of Trustees to bring our community together. For example, I have:

***On Achieving Financial Stability***

- Written and secured grants available through the State of Ohio and the U.S. Government to support growth at Wilmington College, including:
  - A \$400,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Higher Education to implement a new and innovative Social Work Pathway Program, created in partnership with Wilmington College, Southern State Community College (SSCC), Cincinnati State Technical and Community College (CSTCC), and Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services (GCBHS). The initiative is tailored to bridge the gap between public and private educational resources and address the behavioral health needs of underserved populations in the southwest Ohio region.
  - A \$119,414 grant from the Ohio Department of Higher Education for Great Minds Fellowships as a means for attracting and retaining outstanding students in the social work field.

- A \$93,276 grant to Wilmington College in support of mental health services and programming for calendar years 2024 and 2025.
- Driven philanthropic support of strategic investments in campus infrastructure, including:
  - \$558,656 of the estimated \$630,000 (or 88%) raised to resurface Beckett Track in Williams Stadium, which has not been fully resurfaced since 2003. Subsurface materials have been ordered, and core samples are being analyzed for quality. The track project is expected to be completed by the fall of 2024.
  - \$368,000 raised toward \$7M Ag Pavilion to support classroom, laboratory, and arena space at the Academic Farm. I have established an Ag Pavilion Task Force involving members of the campus community and Board of Trustees to identify and research foundations that may be a good match to our project goals or outcomes; develop a general plan for site evaluation, engineering, and pre-construction assessment; and gather additional pre-construction or construction estimates or develop an RFP.

### ***On Supporting the Quaker Tradition and Enhancing Communication***

- Facilitated an All-Campus Visioning process to help advance a vision for the next strategic plan. The sessions consisted of facilitated hour-long workshops that each presented one of five vision queries. The queries were derived from a retreat conducted in July of 2023 by the Board of Trustees. Following each workshop, a digital survey was also administered to the campus community to gather additional feedback. The comprehensive and rich data from the workshops and surveys will be shared with the campus community and used in future strategic planning processes.
- Launched a blog, “By Many Small Steps” to regularly communicate campus updates, events, and professional development opportunities ([www.wilmingtoncollegecommunityupdates.com](http://www.wilmingtoncollegecommunityupdates.com)); wrote feature articles for the Link Magazine on the institution being “Remarkably Resilient” and well-prepared for the challenges facing higher education.

### ***On Promoting Diversity and Intercultural Competence***

- Supported faculty and staff in the development of the Prison Education Program, which seeks to decrease recidivism, improve the job prospects for returning citizens, and enhance well-being. To date, we have hired a program director and obtained all necessary approvals from the Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, and the Higher Learning Commission for three sites: Lebanon, Warren, and Dayton Correctional Institutions; Wilmington is set to begin courses in May of 2024 and anticipates a cohort of up to 105 students.
- Led an administrative team itself representing diversity across race, gender, ethnicity, age, religious identity, and experience; as a team, we regularly practice respect for all persons through cooperation and collaboration, and collectively seek to enhance and support a diverse campus community in our recruitment and retention efforts and hiring practices.

### ***On Empowering an Effective Leadership Team***

- Engaged a Project Management (PM) approach to the development and tracking of new initiatives through collaboration with members of the President’s Council and the Vice President for Information Technology and Operations. All new initiatives are evaluated for their alignment with the Mission, Vision, and Core Values, and tracked weekly through the Smartsheet PM system.
- Collaborated with faculty and Academic Affairs administration to develop and incubate new, hybrid academic programs through the Rize Education consortium, including Public Health, Logistics,

Nutrition, and Cyber Security. To date, the Academic Policies Committee and Faculty have approved Public Health for launch in the Fall of 2024. Other programs are under development.

- Worked with Student Affairs and Academic Affairs administration to comprehensively review the College's academic support and student engagement functions and re-align staffing, resources, and operations to enhance quality of services, improve efficiencies, and continue to promote successful student outcomes.

### ***On Strengthening Town/Gown Relationships***

- Met regularly with the Clinton County Workforce Collaborative to discuss creating certifications, micro-credentials, and degree programs applicable to the regional workforce and job market; facilitated a partnership with Ed2Go, our digital platform for professional and workforce development.

These initiatives have not only strengthened the physical and financial condition of the institution, but they have also leveraged signature partnerships, broadened the scope and delivery of the Wilmington College experience to key constituencies, and established a framework through which a new strategic plan can be developed.

This last year has also taught me something that I think is important: Wilmington College historically and currently provides our students with an exceptional education, but we have not “stitched together” all of the various and wonderful things that we and our students do. This year’s visioning process will enable us to develop and share widely the proud narrative of who we and our students are and why Wilmington College is of such value.

I am especially happy to note that the progress we have made since the spring of 2023 is just the beginning. With the support of the Board, the campus community, the Wilmington and broader community, and our alumni, I am eager to continue this journey, doing all I can to help bring to fruition the many ideas and goals shared by the campus community that I know will further elevate and grow Wilmington College.

Perhaps most of all, I want to express my thanks to my campus colleagues, our students, the Wilmington Quaker Meeting, our many graduates, and those beyond the campus who take pride in and support our efforts. Working with each of you has been a genuine pleasure for which I’ll always be grateful.

Thank you for considering my application for the position of Wilmington College's twentieth President. I hope you will find my leadership skills, collaborative nature, educational background, deep understanding of our Quaker beliefs, and frankly, love for the College, make me uniquely qualified for the role of President of Wilmington College.

I look forward to the possibility of continuing my service to this incredible institution and am excited about the future we can grow together.

Sincerely,

Coreen (Corey) Henry Cockerill, Ph.D.

Enclosures