An Invitation to Apply for

President

FISK UNIVERSITY

Nashville, TN

THE SEARCH

The Fisk University Presidential Search Committee, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University, seeks a dynamic, strategic, and transformational President to lead one of the nation’s most treasured academic institutions. In addition to galvanizing the Fisk community around a distinctive course for the University’s future, the President will be charged with enhancing student success, building strong partnerships, and attracting philanthropic support. Founded in 1866 as a private, historically black University, Fisk is celebrating 150 years of cultivating excellence within its faculty and preparing young people for achievement in every field of human endeavor. With an operating budget of $30M, it enrolls approximately 760 students and regularly ranks in the top 10 among historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in 2016.

This year’s sesquicentennial marks a moment of careful reflection for the Board of Trustees, alumni, faculty, staff, students, donors, partners, and friends, as they recruit and select a leader to oversee the coming decade of strategic change. Refining its strong liberal arts curriculum, expanding interdisciplinary courses, animating the student experience, and renewing facilities are but a few of the key challenges facing the University. Toward these ends, the next President will leverage and build upon Fisk’s rich legacy of intellectual rigor and its supportive, family culture. As the oldest institution of higher learning in Nashville, Tennessee, the first predominantly black campus to receive a Phi Beta Kappa Society charter, and the first African-American institution to gain accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Fisk is an indispensable institution of both higher education and American history.

The successful candidate will bring a keen sense of the landscape of higher education and small and private colleges. He or she will be an inspiring team builder, powerful communicator and fundraiser, collaborative problem-solver, and adroit fiscal manager. Candidates should possess a distinguished record of senior leadership experience and professional achievement in higher education or an equivalent level of responsibility in business, government, or not-for-profit enterprises. A sophisticated
sense of the opportunities and challenges facing HBCUs and a passion for their purposes are essential. The President will be expected to champion Fisk's mission and serve as its persuasive and dynamic ambassador locally, nationally, and internationally. A terminal degree is preferred but not required.

A search committee comprised of representatives from the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, a student, and a community leader has been formed to conduct a search for Fisk University's next President; and alumni across the country have been consulted for insights about the emerging opportunities and challenges ahead for Fisk and the President. The Board of Trustees has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in this process. Applications, nominations, and inquiries should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

**FISK UNIVERSITY: HISTORY, LEGACY, AND MISSION**

Perhaps no single institution has played so central a role in the shaping of African-American learning and culture. W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the leading educators, philosophers, and co-founders of the NAACP, was an 1888 graduate of Fisk. Booker T. Washington, founder of Tuskegee University, sent all of his children to the college for their baccalaureate education. And after graduating from Fisk with honors in 1967, Nikki Giovanni, world-renowned poet, writer, activist, and educator, helped to define the African-American voice of the 1960s, 1970s, and beyond, domestically and abroad.

Other notable graduates include John Hope Franklin, Hazel O’ Leary (Fisk’s 14th President), Niara Sudarkasa, Bradley Sheares, Kym Whitley, Diane Nash, Marion Barry, and U.S. Representative John Lewis.

In 1865, barely six months after the end of the Civil War and just two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, three men — John Ogden, the Reverend Erastus Milo Cravath, and the Reverend Edward P. Smith — established the Fisk School in Nashville.

The school was named in honor of General Clinton B. Fisk of the Tennessee Freedmen's Bureau, who provided the new institution with facilities in former Union Army barracks near the present site of Nashville's Union Station. In these facilities, Fisk convened its first classes on January 9, 1866. Fisk’s first students ranged in age from seven to seventy, but shared common experiences of slavery and poverty, and an extraordinary thirst for learning. Ogden, Cravath, and Smith, along with others in their movement, shared a dream of an educational institution that would be open to all, regardless of race, and that would measure itself by "the highest standards, not of Negro education, but of American education at its best." Their dream was incorporated as Fisk University on August 22, 1867.

The tradition of excellence at Fisk has developed out of a history marked by struggle, perseverance, and resilience. Fisk's world-famous Jubilee Singers originated as a group of traveling students who set out from Nashville on October 6, 1871, taking the entire contents of the University treasury with them for travel expenses, praying that through their music they could somehow raise enough money to keep open the doors of their debt-ridden school.

The singers struggled at first, but before long, their performances so electrified audiences that they traveled throughout the United States and Europe, moving to tears audiences that included William
Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Ulysses S. Grant, William Gladstone, Mark Twain, Johann Strauss, and Queen Victoria.

To this day, each October 6, Fisk pauses to observe the anniversary of the singers' departure from campus in 1871. The contemporary Jubilee Singers perform in a University convocation — and conclude the day's ceremonies with a pilgrimage to the grave sites of the original singers, where once again, the old songs are sung at the burial places of the first performers.

The Jubilee Singers introduced much of the world to the spiritual as a musical genre — and in the process raised funds that preserved their University and permitted construction of Jubilee Hall, the South's first permanent structure built for the education of black students. As a designated National Historical Landmark, today, Jubilee Hall remains the dramatic focal point of Fisk's campus.

Even before regional accreditation was available to African-American institutions, Fisk had gained recognition by leading universities throughout the nation and by such agencies as the Board of Regents of the State of New York — enabling Fisk graduates to enter graduate and professional schools to study for advanced degrees. Then, in 1930, Fisk became the first African-American institution to gain accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It was also the first such institution to be placed on the approved lists of the Association of American Universities (1933) and the American Association of University Women (1948).

In 1953, Fisk received a charter for the first chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa Society on a predominantly black campus.

**Fisk University: Today**

**Location and Campus**

A thriving city with a southern flair, Nashville, TN is among the fastest growing metropolitan communities in the U.S. It is the center of state government and business including health care, education, and is a national headquarters of gospel and country music. The city and surrounding counties are home to the corporate headquarters of the Hospital Corporation of America, Asurion, Bridgestone Americas, Nissan North America and many other companies.

The diversity, low cost of living, booming cultural base, and absence of personal income tax are all species of attraction for the 100 people who have relocated to the city every day for the last year. Downtown Nashville offers music, concerts, restaurants, and access to professional sporting events featuring the NFL’s Tennessee Titans and the NHL’s Nashville Predators. In the last 10 years, Nashville was rated the #1 Smartest Place to Live by Kiplinger’s Personal Finance Magazine.

The city's central geographic location in the Midwest is a transportation hub and allows faculty, staff, and students to reach U.S. and international destinations with ease and affordability by car or via the Nashville International Airport. As home to 28 institutions of higher education, Nashville creates a vibrant intellectual and academic atmosphere. Nashville is also considered to be a city of churches and has a long line of progressive, responsible metropolitan government. The tourism industry is flourishing along with related arts and entertainment offerings. There are also three other HBCUs in Nashville:
Meharry Medical College, Tennessee State University, and American Baptist College, which expands the educational, professional, and spiritual opportunities for students.

In February of 1978, Fisk’s 47-acre campus was designated as a National Historic District in recognition of its architectural, historic, and cultural significance.

**ACADEMICS**

Academic excellence is the hallmark of Fisk University.

The University confers degrees at the baccalaureate and master’s levels. 16 degree programs are available at the undergraduate level through the School of Humanities and Behavioral Social Sciences and the School of Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Business. At the graduate level, four master’s degrees are offered within the School of Graduate Studies.

The curriculum’s focus on liberal arts is designed to prepare students for living in a diverse and increasingly technology-driven society. To that end, Fisk continues to invest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education. It is proud to note its Department of Chemistry's place on the approved list of the American Chemical Society. Fisk is also delighted that it remains the only HBCU ever to be awarded the prestigious R&D 100 award, and to date has been awarded the distinction four times.

Since 2010, The Fisk-Vanderbilt Master’s-to-Ph.D. Bridge Program has produced 18 Ph.D. graduates in physics, astronomy, and materials science, disciplines in which women, African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans are underrepresented. The Program is on track to graduate an average of three to four each year. This places the program at the top of productivity of Ph.D. degrees awarded to underrepresented minorities.

In November 2015, the National Science Foundation released its most recent study ranking U.S. higher education programs by their expenditures in research and development. Fisk University’s research in the physical sciences ranks in the top three percent for the nation while Fisk’s overall research ranks in the top eight percent among all U.S. universities and colleges. On August 29, 2016, Washington Monthly released the 2016 rankings of National Universities in the Liberal Arts category. Among the top 239 colleges and universities surveyed this year, Fisk ranked #1 in the nation when rated by “research expenditures” with a total of $9.9 million. Introduced in 2006, research (producing cutting-edge scholarship) is one of the metrics by which the Washington, DC based magazine gauges an institution’s contribution to the public good. Overall, Fisk also ranked fourth among the Liberal Arts HBCUs rated by Washington Monthly.

According to the American Physical Society (April 2014), Fisk is the number one producer of underrepresented minority students who have earned master’s degrees in Physics. It is ranked in the top 15 institutions in the nation for awarding the master’s in Physics degree for all students, and tied for fourth place for Physics Master’s degrees awarded to women of any ethnic background.

The John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library, a first-class repository of some of America’s most priceless documents, memorabilia, and African American art; and the Carl Van Vechten Gallery, a one
of a kind art gallery, house resources to which Fisk’s students and learning community have ready access.

The University holds membership in the American Association of Schools of Music, the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. It is a member of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States and a sponsoring institution of the Oak Ridge Associated Universities, Inc. It is also approved for teacher licensure preparation by the State of Tennessee Department of Education.

Sixty-one percent of students who earn a Fisk degree enter graduate or professional school within one year of their graduation, ahead of the national average of 23 percent. Of note, eight members of Fisk’s Class of 2016 were Phi Beta Kappa Society inductees.

FACULTY RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

Fisk University faculty are very active and successful in attracting external financial support to advance the research, scholarship, and educational mission. Fisk students develop a broader intellectual depth and agility from participation in research and scholarly activities. These activities enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of Fisk graduates to corporate, educational, professional, and nonprofit enterprises.

Currently, total active federal research and contract awards amount to approximately $43 million, total private grants and contracts are approximately $1 million, and total state awards and contracts are approximately $781,000. For an institution of Fisk’s size, external support on this scale is outstanding.

Federal support represents a diverse set of U. S. Government departments and agencies including:

- National Institutes of Health
- National Science Foundation
- U. S. Department of Defense
- U. S. Department of Homeland Security
- U. S. Department of Energy
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- U. S. Department of Education

Private and state support includes:

- Mellon Foundation
- Google
- Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
- Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation
- American Legacy Foundation
- United Church of Christ
- SSCDC
- Meharry Medical College
- Math Association of America
- Tennessee Arts Commission
- State of Tennessee
Tennessee Department of Health

New Presidential leadership will bring new opportunities to increase the external funding to support the research, scholarship, and education mission of the University. A new Office of Sponsored Research and New Initiatives has been created at the University to increase, support, and promote faculty research. The President will provide guidance to the Provost and the Vice President of Sponsored Research on new areas that can garner federal, state, and private funding.

Possible new grantor entities include:

- U. S. Agency for International Development
- Institute of Museum and Library Services
- U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- U. S. Department of Health and Human Services

Fisk’s faculty includes a Rhodes Scholar, Fulbright Scholars, and a Salzburg Global Fellow, to name a few. Additionally, Fisk faculty have been recognized with the prestigious 1858 Prize for Southern Contemporary Art in 2016 from the oldest arts organization in the United States; the national R&D 100 Awards in 2013, 2010, 2001, and 1998; National Science Foundation Career Award; the 2012 National Association of Social and Behavioral Scientist W.E.B. DuBois Award for being one of America’s leading scholars in the Social Sciences; Sam Walton Fellow Award; Bush-Hewlett Award from the American Council on Education.

Fisk is home to 57 full-time faculty (44 tenured/tenure track and 13 non-tenure track), and 44 part-time faculty, of whom 96% hold terminal degrees. The personal attention and sense of family central to the Fisk educational experience is reflected in the student-faculty ratio of 13:1. More than 71% of classes have fewer than 20 students, enabling faculty to provide students a high degree of individualized attention and instill in them a thirst for lifelong learning.

**CURRICULUM**

The strength and excellence of Fisk’s instructional offerings and student outcomes are nationally recognized. Fisk has responded to new areas of intellectual inquiry by adding to the curriculum a new degree program in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

All U. S. colleges and universities are re-examining their curricula in order to prepare their students to be productive, agile, and relevant in their careers. Under the new President, Fisk has the opportunity to assess and evaluate current and future national and international needs for talent. As the global population grows and matures, there is an ever greater need for informed health services, improved agricultural production through biochemistry-informed research, greater data management and use to inform decision-making, to name a few points of focus that should shape and inform Fisk’s curriculum. In such close proximity to major corporations, Fisk would do well to partner with industry leaders on understanding new areas of inquiry within its curriculum, identifying experts to engage students, providing realistic problems to address inside and outside of the classroom and lab, and generally expanding the educational experience of Fisk students. A Fisk liberal arts education focuses on broad
intellectual exploration, mastery of a major subject, and the concomitant skills of discipline, persistence, research and analytical acumen, communication, and critical thinking.

Fisk University’s core curriculum provides a pedagogical framework for students to develop their skills in becoming competent, resourceful, global leaders. The curriculum explicitly teaches critical thinking in the humanities and social and natural sciences. It reinforces respect for diverse viewpoints and ethical values in the academy. Students develop effective problem solving skills for addressing real world challenges, and intellectual humility through service learning. Students engage in quantitative and qualitative research in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities as they understand the complexities of the human condition.

Coursework enhances students’ critical thinking and problem-solving ability. The core curriculum includes language culture, mathematics, natural science, literature, the arts, and entrepreneurship and aims to foster and enhance skills, knowledge, awareness, and dispositions that lead to the development of competent, resourceful, and imaginative leaders; encourage an understanding of the social world and natural environment and their relationships to communities; and incubate creativity. Beyond this core, students complete courses in their chosen major and additional fields of interest.

Finally, community service is also encouraged in the curriculum. Fisk grooms its students to become ethical custodians of the human family and to develop a strong consciousness for global and community engagement.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Pre-Medicine

- Joint Pre-Med/Pre-Dental Program with Meharry Medical College
- Fisk-Vanderbilt University Master of Science in Nursing Degree
- Tufts University School of Dental Medicine

Science and Engineering

- Fisk-Case Western University Dual Degree in Science and Engineering (3+2) Programs
- Fisk-Vanderbilt University Master’s–to–Ph.D. Bridge Program
- Pre-Pharmacy Program with Howard University

Arts

- Fisk University-Watkins College of Art and Design Minor Studies Partnership
- Music Business Collaborative Agreement with Belmont University

General

- W.E.B. Du Bois General University Honors Program
- Study Abroad and Student Exchange
- MBA Vanderbilt Owen Graduate School of Management
- Articulation agreements with several community colleges
ACCREDITATION

Fisk University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Bachelor of Science (B.S.), Bachelor of Music (B.M.), and Master of Arts (M.A.) degrees. The University is currently preparing for re-accreditation in 2018.

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCES

Fisk bylaws provision governance by a Board of Trustees of up to 35 members. This number must include three alumni trustees, two faculty trustees, and two student trustees. The remaining trustees are notable business, academic, and civic leaders predominantly from outside the Metropolitan Nashville area. The size of the current board is 21. Trustees may not serve more than two consecutive terms of four years each without being off the board for at least one year. No trustee may be automatically appointed to serve a second term; rather the trustee must demonstrate engagement with the Board, the University, and its constituents and must meet all responsibilities and expectations established by the Board. All trustees are required to make a financial contribution to the University.

Fisk’s Board of Trustees is organized into the following standing committees: Executive Committee; Academic Excellence & Student Engagement; Financial Strength and its Facilities Subcommittee; Audit Committee; Development Committee; Strategy Committee; Nominating & Corporate Governance Committee; and Investment Committee.

Fisk’s Board of Trustees meets three times each year, generally in the first week of October, the first week of February and somewhere between April and June, depending on the Commencement Date and other pertinent scheduling matters. When appropriate the committees meet outside of regularly scheduled board meetings in person or telephonically.

Fisk’s total endowment stands at $20 million. The projected operating budget for FY2016-2017 is approximately $30 million. 98 percent of Fisk’s students receive some form of aid from the state and/or federal government.

The next President must possess the financial sophistication, creativity, and conviction necessary to innovate and implement solutions in financial planning and to make challenging decisions on the allocation of limited resources. The President will also need to communicate these decisions to the Fisk community and external audiences. Their support is essential.

ADVANCEMENT

The Office of Institutional Advancement (OIA) is a central administrative unit that plays a pivotal role in the growth and development of Fisk University. The office’s primary functions are to secure funds and resources that enable the University to strengthen its financial viability and fulfill its vital mission. Implicit in these functions is the creation and continuance of sustainable relationships with alumni, corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, and philanthropic entities that have the means and the desire to support the University in various ways. The maintenance of such relationships is predicated on the Office’s demonstrated ability to develop and implement policies, practices, and procedures that support prospect research, external communication, data management, stewardship, and post-award reporting.
OIA raises unrestricted and temporarily restricted funds as well as funds for the endowment. Over the past couple of years, the University has raised over 5 million dollars on an annual basis of which roughly 50% is unrestricted and less than 15% has been for the endowment. Last year, approximately 40% of all donations came from alumni with a participation rate of 23%. This year, Fisk is targeting 6 million dollars through a series of initiatives, which include new corporate partnerships as well as new constituents. Nashville has grown exponentially with a variety of companies that require diverse talent and Fisk is establishing relations to secure a significant increase in scholarship donations. Moreover, the University is pursuing a set of initiatives to engage younger alumni, particularly the classes of the 1990s that have been significantly underrepresented in alumni giving. The goal is to raise alumni giving rates to around 35% with an active mailing campaign aimed at showcasing the exciting progress made at the University.

ALUMNI

From its earliest years, Fisk has depended on the support of its alumni—both as donors and as volunteers to sustain its mission. This relationship represents the unique and tightly woven fabric connecting Fiskites (alumni), past, present and future. They have responded generously, contributing their time, talents, and treasure to ensure the University's continuing excellence. They participate in formal and informal mentoring and other support of Fisk students, provide shadowing and internship opportunities, and encourage and actively recruit students to apply to Fisk. Today the more than 10,000 living alumni pursue a seemingly endless variety of professions, and include distinguished professionals, state and national politicians, scientists, internationally recognized actors, performers and writers, and recipients of prestigious appointments and awards.

Keeping alumni, the bedrock of Fisk’s support, actively engaged and well-informed is vital to the immediate and long-term health of the University, as an institution whose community/family extends far beyond the campus gates. Fisk’s primary points of contact for its graduates are the General Alumni Association of Fisk University (GAAFU) (representing numerous Alumni Chapters across the country), the Alumni Office and the Office of Career Development, which provides counseling and guidance for current students, and maintains active connections with employers.

Fiskites connect with each other and the University through classes, reunions, mini-reunions, awards, regional meetings, and on campus. Volunteer leadership contributes perspective and energy to help guide and support the University.

The majority of all funds raised by Fisk annually come from alumni. The percentage of alumni who give is second highest among HBCUs.

ENROLLMENT

The Class of 2019, last year’s 205 incoming freshmen, averaged 3.1 in high school GPA, 21 on the ACT, and 1438 on the SAT. Among them were 26 Fisk Presidential Scholars, 20 Fisk Legacies, three National Merit Scholars/Semi-Finalists, and a Gates Millennial Scholar. One third of this class completed Advanced Placement courses and, since enrolling, biology ranks most popular as their major, followed by business administration, political science, psychology, and chemistry.
Approximately 25% of Fisk undergraduate students are Tennessee residents with 75% percent hailing from around the country, including Alaska, and abroad. In the last five years, international enrollment has increased to 9%; the highest representation comes from Nigeria, Jamaica, and elsewhere in the Caribbean.

**STUDENTS**

Fisk attracts highly motivated, ethnically diverse, and values-driven students. In many cases, these young women and men are drawn to Fisk’s rich legacy and pronounced commitment to the HBCU tradition of family. In outlining their decision to enroll at Fisk, students often remark, “Fisk chose me”. Indeed, it is Fisk’s tight-knit community that students take great pride in bestowing upon each incoming class. Roughly 80% of students reside on campus.

Student leaders are active and outspoken. The Student Government Association is the student body’s central organ of communication, leadership, and advocacy; engaging vigorously with Trustees and senior administration and relentless in their lobbying of student interests. Leadership, however, is the custom of each and every student group on campus. Be it black Greek-lettered organizations, the Pre-Nursing Club, or the Caribbean Student Association, Fisk students commune meaningfully, inspiring one another toward achievement, civic participation, and service. The Jubilee Singers, of course, are the University’s mainstay; relating a uniquely special dimension of campus history and connecting students, quite viscerally, to Fisk’s rich tradition of music. Students hail from 35 different states as well as several countries in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean.

From the Civil Rights era to present day, Fiskites are a paragon of student activism and engagement. And perhaps nowhere is it truer that students assume prime ownership of University life than at Fisk. The University is better for it.

**THE PRESIDENCY**

The presidency of Fisk University is an expansive opportunity for a substantial leader to share, invest and grow. The President is the chief executive and administrative officer at Fisk University and reports to the Board of Trustees. The President is an ex-officio member of all standing committees of the Board of Trustees, is responsible for the supervision, management, and governance of the University, and has final authority over the internal affairs of the University. Reporting to the President are officers of the University who serve on his/her Cabinet and include the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Finance and Accounting/Chief Financial Officer, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, Vice President for Enrollment Management, and a dotted line reporting relationship with the General Counsel.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

This is a critical time for Fisk. The national landscape of higher education is changing rapidly. Challenges presented by demographic shifts, fluctuations in student enrollment, expectations of parents and students and economic pressures are particularly acute at HBCUs and at private liberal arts colleges/universities.
Fisk University is thoughtful, sober, and ambitious in its effort to strengthen its programs and raise its institutional profile. As a stalwart of the HBCU promise to catapult African American scholars toward economic and intellectual leadership, Fisk is fiercely committed to success and the success of its next leader. In such a partner, the Board seeks alignment with its vision for the future. The President will advance and promote Fisk’s mission; inspire and support its faculty, staff, and students; champion excellence in teaching and research; foreground STEM education in future curriculum expansion; successfully shepherd the university through its upcoming reaccreditation; and engage seriously with and expand partnerships with the business community, civic leaders, alumni, and friends of the University in realizing its potential. The President will also explore and pursue advancements in the delivery of curriculums and the diversity of the Fisk student body. In so doing, she or he has the opportunity leave a legacy that will last for generations.

The overarching challenge of the next President will be positioning Fisk for long-term financial health. In close collaboration with trustees, senior officers of the University, and key stakeholders and partners, the President will also:

**Champion Fisk and its aspirations in Nashville, TN, across the country, and around the world.**

The next President will embrace this period of transformation as an opportunity to rearticulate Fisk’s brand and distinctive value proposition for a variety of audiences (parents, students, and partners). As chief ambassador, s/he will acclaim the Fisk story, the inroads of its alumni, the dedication of its faculty, and the resilience of its students; and, in this process, inspire a broad coalition of local, national, and global entities to join Fisk as partners and invest generously and purposefully in its future. As a result, Fisk’s President will come to be known as a national and international voice for the abiding significance of an HBCU education and the profound impact Fisk has had on American higher education.

Most immediately, the President will forge strategic corporate and civic partnerships in the Nashville community and state of Tennessee; laying the groundwork for sustained mutual benefit between Fisk, its beloved host city, and a cadre of state influencers and policy-makers.

**Increase long-term advancement support of Fisk University and renew a culture of philanthropy.**

The next President will serve as the lead fundraiser for the University, working closely with the Board of Trustees and the Vice President of Advancement. The President must have the stamina, savvy, and charisma to cultivate new donors within and beyond Fisk’s alumni community. She or he will inspire new and existing donors, and friends of the University, to aggressively grow the endowment and support specific projects and campaigns.

Like many colleges and universities, Fisk's aspirations often outstrip its resources. Its next President will be expected to lead the University community to identify or confirm priorities, and then plan and lead a capital campaign or campaigns to secure funding for Fisk’s most pressing needs over the next decade and beyond.
The President will also oversee a refinement of the development function at Fisk. Under her/his leadership, it will double its efforts to garner non-state resources for University programs and promote the reputation of the University. This includes increased grants and contracts, foundation gifts, individual donations, and an enhanced, proactive public relations function.

**Set the University on a course of financial strength.**

The economic downturn of 2008 was disproportionately taxing on institutions of American higher education. Fisk, private and tuition-dependent, endured an adverse impact profoundly that year and in those that followed and now faces considerable hurdles in developing a new business model. While it ended FY 2015-2016 in the black, the University is continually challenged in generating revenue from tuition, fees, and private gifts sufficient to successfully fund the discount rate required to attract its student base and operate and renovate campus facilities. The new President will commit to identifying and actualizing new revenue streams on the path toward establishing a sustainable long-term funding model.

On arrival, the President will evaluate the University’s infrastructure for and effectiveness with budget planning and management and restructure as necessary. She or he will also spearhead efforts to generate off-balance sheet revenue, including but not limited to real estate and commercial ventures.

Finally, the President must lead a University-wide examination of current activities and practices, increasing efficiencies and cost effectiveness, as it relates to programs and operations, wherever possible.

**Invest in the physical plant.**

Nashville is building. Current private and commercial real estate activity present an enormous opportunity for the University and the next President to partner locally, take reasonable risks, and reimagine what is possible for the areas immediately adjacent to and surrounding the campus.

Simultaneously, Fisk had considerable deferred maintenance and an urgent imperative to invest in significant refurbishing and repurposing of aging buildings on campus. To guide near- and long-term decision on the physical design and future growth of the campus, the President, in consultation with the Board’s facilities subcommittee and the Vice President of Facilities, will expand the Campus Master Plan; identifying priorities essential to the realization of the University’s academic, student life, and research goals. She or he will articulate a strategy and cultivate the partnerships necessary for its implementation.

**Strengthen the faculty and enhance the pedagogical offerings of the University.**

The next President will be a partner to the faculty, working with them to create an intellectual environment that promotes outstanding research, elevates standards of scholarly excellence, and spurs innovation within the curriculum. She or he will champion and support faculty in seeking externally funded research and pursuing multidisciplinary research efforts.
Championing the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, while driving innovation within STEM and business fields, the President will foster an appreciation of diverse intellectual traditions at Fisk. The President will encourage collaboration among academic departments, the creation of cross-disciplinary programs and modern dual majors, and the development of academic initiatives that are responsive to the manifold changes awaiting Fisk students in industry and global leadership.

The President will also give high priority to faculty development, investing in them as individuals and in their scholarly endeavors and participation in the relevant affairs of their discipline.

**Modernize information technology resources and capability.**

Leading the implementation of a coherent IT strategy and building the infrastructure required to affect its ambitions will be a central charge of the new President. To date, Fisk has experimented with a variety of enterprise and enrollment systems which are not well integrated. Tuition revenues, spending, and reconciliation are not updated in real-time, limiting the intelligence with which administrators can make prudent financial choices. A reassessment is in order. The new President will need to appraise the current infrastructure and identify new approaches to enhance performance, improve reporting, increase automation, and streamline delivery of strategic information across the University.

Additionally, as the digital age advances, so too does the role of technology in teaching and research. Accordingly, Fisk’s academic mission must evolve with an eye toward promoting digital learning and preparing its students to lead successful lives in a networked world. The next President will bring a keen understanding of this work as well as a desire to bridge the gap between traditional and modern modes of delivering a high quality education. Working closely with faculty, the library, student affairs personnel, and others, the President will invest in state-of-the-art, versatile, wireless, learning and creative spaces that enable students, faculty, and staff to accelerate, deepen, and ultimately transform their many forms of engagement in a digital world.

**Animate the student experience.**

With interests as diverse as their backgrounds, upon graduation, Fisk students should be prepared to lead fulfilling lives in an increasingly changing world. The next President will marshal all available University resources toward this effort—academic advising, research prizes/fellowship advising, leadership and student group activities, educational experiences abroad, experiential learning, and, other initiatives aimed at enhancing students’ intellectual, cultural, social, and professional development. The President will ensure that there are explicit connections between students’ classroom and co-curricular experiences and the world they will engage once leaving Fisk.

Over the next five years, this President will also strengthen the residential experience, increase the number of internship and research opportunities, expand Fisk’s international footprint in the way of institutional partners for study abroad, augment learning innovations through technology in and out of the classroom; and, in conjunction with the Provost’s office, build a contemporary, multi-disciplinary curriculum.

Additionally, the President, in partnership with GAAFU, will be intentional about deepening existing connections between students and recent graduates, as well as active and retired alumni, who the
development office has identified as enthusiastic about mentoring current students, virtually and/or in person.

**Assemble a high achieving leadership team.**

The next President will assemble a leadership team of capable professionals who are comfortable in a results-oriented environment. It will be necessary to examine the expertise and effectiveness of her or his team, ensuring that all University functions are achieving at the highest level while working harmoniously in collaboration with one another in support of Fisk’s mission. The next President will evaluate the existing leadership and organizational structure, determine roles and responsibilities moving forward, define specific and measurable objectives, and, in a manner that sustains enthusiasm and goodwill, reinforce a culture of accountability that serves the University’s best interests.

The President will establish clear lines of delegation, empowering senior staff to make challenging and informed decisions, ensuring that she or he has the time and space to attend to affairs befitting a President.

**Insist on a culture of accountability, transparency, and responsiveness among administration, faculty, and staff.**

Fisk’s student and alumni community, near and afar, is an active one that cares deeply about and holds distinct and varied views on the University and its future. It is essential that the next President possess the energy and ability to engage and communicate with them as a whole, and demand the highest level of responsiveness, at all levels of the University. The next President must be a visible and active presence both on and off-campus, and have the cultural fluency and sensitivity necessary to engage in conversations about complicated issues. She or he must be proactive and resourceful as a communicator, encouraging officers of the University to take pride in timely, transparent, and thoughtful communication as it relates to the business of Fisk and its many stakeholders.

**THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PRESIDENT**

Fisk University seeks an exceptional leader with the vision, leadership qualities, and energy to inspire all of the members of the University community. The Search Committee understands that no single candidate will have all of the ideal qualifications but seeks candidates with the following experience and abilities:

- **Commitment to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs):** A visceral affinity toward and a firm commitment to HBCUs as well as an understanding of the special responsibility required to maintain and advance them; an enthusiasm for articulating their important histories, championing their significance, and advocating for their future, in an increasingly diverse society.

- **A Proven Leader and Visionary:** A record of imaginative and verifiable success that will inspire and earn the confidence of all University constituents; and the proven capacity to weave a compelling and authentic narrative out of the unique history of her/his institutions. The ability to anticipate and plan for the university’s future needs and ambitions, the commitment to fortify and, in some cases, create the requisite infrastructure and systems essential therein, and the
persistence to lead with courage, through and beyond, the realization of Fisk’s many aspirations.

- **Professional Distinction and Intellectual Leadership:** Earned distinction in academia, industry, or the civic and government sectors; a demonstrated commitment to exceptional scholarly inquiry; appreciation and savvy for recruiting outstanding faculty; and an abiding regard for research and teaching and the capacity to build scholarly programs at significant scale.

- **A History of Successful Fundraising:** The capacity to represent Fisk compellingly to donors and a track record of meeting ambitious philanthropic goals; the ability to ignite support among alumni, young and old, and champion the University.

- **Business Acumen:** In addition to fundraising, the President will possess other skills essential to managing an enterprise, such as strategic financial planning, intelligent budgeting, and the development of achievable business plans, analysis, and generation of innovative revenue streams, and prudent expense control.

- **An Experienced Manager:** A demonstrated administrative capacity and ability to inspire and lead a team capable of managing a multifaceted institution whose recent initiatives and advances have created pressures of many kinds; and also the capacity to think strategically, with others, in a manner that transcends the vexing concerns of the moment. A leader who will collaboratively design and implement an institutional transformation.

- **Public Presence and Communication Skills:** The President will be an extremely articulate, persuasive, and sought after writer and speaker, a force for intellectual and professional community building, and possessed of the charisma and oratory to excite and inspire listeners in any setting.

- **Leadership Style:** Gifted in her or his ability to energize faculty, students, staff, parents, alumni, trustees, and external stakeholders, and to persuade audiences locally, nationally, and internationally to believe in Fisk’s future; a collaborative, inclusive, and transparent leadership style with a willingness to consult, listen, praise, and admonish; an effective negotiator, practiced in the arts of conflict resolution and ombudsmanship; maintaining the highest standards of ethics and integrity.

- **Personal Style:** The President will be enthused by the opportunities and challenges that present themselves at Fisk, will move easily and with an amiable manner in a wide variety of social milieus, and be comfortable with the extensive travel necessary to meet the challenges at hand. Within the Fisk community, the President will be approachable by students, parents, alumni, and staff and demonstrate genuine interest in their impressions of the University.

- **A Proven Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion:** A broad experience with diverse cultures and communities, and the proven capacity to embrace diversity in all aspects, including the savvy to recruit, welcome, retain, and build an integrated, inclusive, and diverse culture.

- **Dedication to the Student Mission:** A deep personal commitment to teaching, research, and learning and an affinity for students.
• A Global Perspective: An appreciation of the importance of teaching students how to value and thrive in cultures other than their own, combined with an understanding of how to integrate a global perspective into the work of an educational institution.

TO APPLY

Fisk University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. Applications, nominations, and inquiries should be sent in confidence to:

Monroe “Bud” Moseley, Michelle Cruz-Williams, or Lionel Anderson
263 Summer Street
Boston, MA 02210
617-262-6500
http://www.imsearch.com/5820

Electronic submission of application materials is strongly encouraged.

Fisk University is an Equal Opportunity Employer.