



## **POSITION PROFILE**

### **Executive Director Fitz Center for Leadership in Community University of Dayton Dayton, Ohio**

#### **The Search**

The University of Dayton seeks a collaborative and strategic leader to serve as the next Executive Director for the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community ([Fitz Center](#)). This is an exceptional opportunity for an innovative leader to mobilize faculty and students to address important needs of the Dayton community and help advance the University's commitment to civic engagement, community engaged learning, student leadership development, as well as excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service.

#### **The University**

The University of Dayton is the largest private university in Ohio and one of the nation's best Catholic universities. Drawing inspiration from its Marianist heritage, the University sustains its commitment to educating the whole person by linking learning and scholarship with leadership and service. The University further distinguishes itself by integrating learning across disciplines, the strength of its Common Academic Program ([CAP](#)), and its ability to provide a deeply personal learning experience for students. Though administratively housed in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Fitz Center plays a vital role in leading University-wide initiatives that greatly impact this deep level of engaged learning. In January of 2015, the University earned the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's Community Engagement Classification and has been named to every President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll since 2010.

The origins of the University date to 1850 when members of the Society of Mary (Marianists) purchased a hilltop farm a short distance outside the growing town of Dayton, Ohio. There, they established a small school for boys, known first as St. Mary's Institute and later as St. Mary's College. The school continued to grow and became the University of Dayton in 1920. In 1935, women were admitted as full time students, 40 years ahead of many other Catholic universities. The mission of the school evolved as it grew into a fully accredited, comprehensive university with an excellent College of Arts and Sciences and distinguished professional schools.

Today, the University is recognized as a top ten Catholic institution of higher learning and a top tier Catholic research university. As a Marianist university, it strives to educate for formation in faith; to provide an integral, quality education; to educate in family spirit; to educate for service, justice, and peace; and to educate for adaptation and change. It has both preserved and adapted its core values as it has grown, redefined itself, and achieved remarkable success over

more than a century and a half. The institution's hallmark is learning that spans the boundaries of the liberal arts and the professions, integrates theory and practice, and reaches out to the greater community in order to strengthen public and civic life. The University's culture is defined by a strong commitment to collegiality, excellence in serving students and one another, and a sense of inclusive community.

With a population of nearly one million, the Dayton metropolitan area is a diverse community boasting renewed downtown and historic neighborhoods, vibrant arts and civic organizations, and a highly favorable cost of living. The city has long been a center of technological development and is home to corporations such as Teradata, Reynolds and Reynolds, Standard Register, and LexisNexis, and to the U.S. Air Force's research center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

The University enjoys a beautiful 388-acre campus comprising over 40 academic, recreational, athletic, administrative, and residence life facilities. Over 95% of all undergraduates live on campus in an environment ideal for living and learning in community. The University has invested considerably in its physical plant in recent years, including the construction of a \$25.3 million fitness and recreation center, a \$22 million renovation of the science center, and the refurbishment of its athletic fields and facilities.

The University's River Campus includes the 1700 South Patterson Building and 115 acres of adjacent land near the Great Miami River. The building has been transformed from a 455,000-square-foot former Fortune 500 corporate headquarters into a stunning academic and research facility. It houses, among other things, the University of Dayton Research Institute, MBA and Education graduate classes, the University Advancement Office, and an Alumni Center.

Several key University centers and institutes are vital to mission- and community-based initiatives. The Center for Catholic Education, within the School of Education and Health Sciences, is a nationally recognized leader in research and programming for Catholic schools. Its core programs, [Lalanne](#) and [Urban Child Development Resource Center](#), are prime examples of sustained community-based engagements that serve urban Catholic schools. The [Institute for Pastoral Initiatives](#) offers adult religious education and faith formation to thousands of participants worldwide via distance learning. The University's [Campus Ministry](#), one of the largest in the nation, challenges students to be leaders who nurture human dignity through building faith-filled communities and fosters spiritual growth through worship, pastoral care, faith formation, service and reflection.

The University has an increasingly international profile and portfolio, and is committed to preparing students to be global citizens. This is accomplished both at home and abroad through an excellent international partnership network, a growing international student and faculty population, integrated curriculum development, and innovative education abroad programs. Faculty and curriculum development are key foci of the international strategy. The University has a residential facility that houses the International Learning Living Community for domestic and international students and recently opened the [University of Dayton China Institute](#), a research center in Suzhou, China.

### **The Fitz Center**

A national leader in civic engagement and community-based learning and service, the Fitz Center initiates and sustains partnerships with urban neighborhoods and regional communities that promote comprehensive community building, provides a context for broadly connected

learning and scholarship, and develops students and faculty as community leaders. Its asset-based community building programs are based on the co-creation of a widely shared vision guided by the values of mutual respect, the common good, and a preferential option for the poor. The work of the Fitz Center requires extensive collaboration between University faculty, staff, and students and its public and private partners. In developing its programs the Fitz Center is guided by best practices of community engaged learning and the principles of the Catholic social tradition. The Center also houses the Fr. Ferree Professor of Social Justice, past president of the University, Bro. Raymond Fitz, S.M.

Founded 15 years ago, the Fitz Center is a unique collaboration between the Dayton community and the University of Dayton. The Center sees itself as a bridge between the issues and agendas of Dayton's neighborhoods, the City, and the greater Dayton region and the resources of the University's students and faculty. The following represent key examples of current Fitz Center initiatives that have transformed engaged learning at the University.

The [Dayton Civic Scholars Program](#), facilitated in partnership with the social science departments, prepares civic professionals and citizen leaders through sustained interdisciplinary civic engagement and scholarship with a focus on the City of Dayton. The program enables up to 45 students to have high community impact as early as junior year by preparing each 15-student cohort for meaningful civic leadership roles. Students meet local leaders and intern in local community organizations and government offices. Capstone projects in the past have included working with the Walnut Hills neighborhood to create a community garden at Cleveland School and an after-school mentoring program for African refugee students at Fairview School in Dayton.

In 2004, the Fitz Center was selected to design the concept and build partnerships for five [Neighborhood School Centers](#) that are part of the Dayton Public School system. This initiative encourages parent and neighborhood participation to increase student success and improve the neighborhoods surrounding the schools. The program links each school with key nonprofit partners, including East End Community Services, YMCA of Greater Dayton, Good Samaritan Hospital, and the Salvation Army Kroc Center of Dayton. The Fitz Center places three UD interns at each school who assist the site coordinator. Approximately 900 University of Dayton students have volunteered to provide one-time or ongoing tutoring and support services at the Neighborhood School Centers during the past year.

The River Stewards program, the flagship program of the [Rivers Institute](#) administered by the Fitz Center, is a community building initiative comprised of students, faculty, staff, and community partners who see our rivers as a strategic natural resource central to the communal, economic, aesthetic and ecological vitality of the region. Grounded in asset-based community development, experiential education and interdisciplinary learning, the River Stewards educate and empower communities to be stewards of their rivers, most notably river systems in Dayton and the Great Miami Valley River watershed. Now entering its tenth year, this interdisciplinary program focuses on leadership development and civic engagement, and prepares civic leaders who will enjoy and protect water resources through education, outreach and stewardship. River Stewards participate in weekly mini-courses, provide service to the community, and work together to develop a capstone project their senior year. Currently there are over 45 River Stewards from over 25 different majors and all undergraduate academic units at the University of Dayton.

With the [Semester of Service](#), a Bonner AmeriCorps program, students pause their full-time studies for a semester to provide 450 hours of direct service in the Dayton community.

Students grow through experiential learning, the creation of intentional community, and professional training and supervision from local social service providers. The program expands the students' world views, facilitates vocational exploration, and empowers them with experience and knowledge to become lifelong advocates for social change. Semester of Service is funded through an endowment and annual grants. Partners in the program have included Daybreak, East End Community Services, Life Essentials, and the Dakota Center. Roughly 20 students participate annually in this program.

Youth Economic Self Sufficiency ([YESS](#)), an AmeriCorps program funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service through ServeOhio (the state commission on volunteering and service), is administered by the Fitz Center. In YESS, AmeriCorps members work with local nonprofits to provide services that encourage self-sufficiency, primarily to young adults who are experiencing homelessness in the Dayton area. The local partners in the YESS Program are [Daybreak](#), [Homefull](#), and the [St. Vincent DePaul Gateway Shelters](#). The program is unique because YESS AmeriCorps members are university students and young adults from Daybreak Youth Shelter who serve as mentors to their peers. The mix of experiences, ages and backgrounds creates a truly enriching community experience.

The Fitz Center also provides special services not only for its own initiatives but those of community partners as well. In fact, it is home to the Research Division of one of its key public partners, the Montgomery County Human Services Planning and Development Department. This partnership affords another resource for students, staff and faculty and promotes engagement with the local network of social service agencies - in particular with the Montgomery County Family and Children First Council, the lead collaborative for health and human services. The Fitz Center also provides expertise in data analyses, social service delivery systems, and neighborhood trend analysis to groups as diverse as the county child protection agency, homeless shelters, and the area's Catholic elementary schools. Researchers also write grant proposals and evaluate ongoing Fitz Center initiatives. The Center provides ongoing faculty development for building strong and reciprocal partnerships with community partners and promoting the value of community engaged learning for the community and students.

## **The Position**

The Executive Director provides vision and leadership for the Fitz Center. Duties and responsibilities include: promoting effective collaboration between University faculty, staff, and community partners; cultivating student leadership; developing new and sustaining existing community partnerships; building on partnerships to creatively envision new areas for growth; obtaining external funding through grants or other funding sources; supervising, developing and mentoring staff members; and effectively stewarding the Center's resources. The Executive Director reports to the Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Research and Experiential Initiatives in the College of Arts & Sciences and currently supervises a staff of eight full-time employees, six graduate assistants and ten undergraduate interns.

There are significant opportunities for growth and transformation in the Fitz Center. In a new "transitional strategic plan" for the University as it prepares to welcome a new President in 2016, experiential and community engaged learning are called out with intentionality. Specifically, strategic initiative 1.4, "Promote learning through active engagement with community," includes the following revised tactics:

- *Expand and support initiatives in community-engaged learning and service, and connect community engagement to students' leadership development through the Marianist educational tradition.*
- *Advance high-impact experiential learning mentored by faculty and staff as a signature element of a University of Dayton education and strengthen infrastructure to coordinate, assess, and sustain high-quality experiential learning.*

As further indication of the University's commitment to experiential and community engaged learning, the provost has commissioned an implementation team led by two associate provosts to develop the new infrastructure of support that will help elevate the breadth and depth of engaged learning for all students. The Executive Director will play a vital role in the team's work and deliverables. Another key opportunity is the development of a strategic plan for the Fitz Center, the groundwork for which has been carefully laid as a result of comprehensive assessment. The Executive Director will also have the opportunity to cultivate and personally participate in scholarly activities linked with the Center and community engaged learning.

Of course, there are also important challenges facing the next Executive Director. Resources for substantive community engaged learning are not unlimited and the landscape for philanthropic support demands the highest levels of relationship building, persistence, and focus of vision. The Executive Director will need to lead efforts to engage more of the faculty and advocate for enhanced recognition of community engaged learning in promotion and tenure documents as well as in merit compensation processes. The Executive Director and the Fitz Center will also play a larger role in serving as a resource for improving assessment of community engaged learning initiatives University-wide.

#### Required Qualifications

- Master's degree
- Demonstrated leadership and effectiveness in organizational and strategic planning
- Success developing and executing programming for community building and/or civic engagement
- Record of working effectively with community-based, non-profit organizations and a variety of governmental and public agencies
- Effective written communication skills
- Budget management experience
- Demonstrated effectiveness supervising staff
- Demonstrated effectiveness working with persons from diverse backgrounds
- Appreciation for the Catholic and Marianist mission and values of the University of Dayton
- Ability to articulate how the Catholic social tradition informs community engaged learning

#### Preferred Qualifications

- Success in securing external funding
- Record of scholarly activities involving community building and/or civic engagement
- Leadership experience in higher education
- Doctoral degree
- Successful experience in developing academic collaborations with faculty for community engaged learning
- Success cultivating student leadership

- Experience with assessment-based continuous improvement of programs and initiatives
- Experience with asset-based model of community building
- Effective interpersonal skills
- Effective oral communication skills
- Demonstrated effectiveness supervising staff at multiple levels

## **TO APPLY**

Application materials, including a cover letter addressing each required and applicable preferred qualifications and interest in the position, current resume/curriculum vita, and three references, must be submitted electronically to <http://jobs.udayton.edu/postings/17934> by September 15, 2015. Anticipated start date is January 1, 2016. References will be treated confidentially and will only be contacted with prior approval at the advanced stages of the process.

Nominations are welcome and may be sent via email to Dr. Paul Vanderburgh, Associate Provost and search committee chair: [vanderburgh@udayton.edu](mailto:vanderburgh@udayton.edu).

*To attain its Catholic and Marianist mission, the University is committed to the principles of diversity, inclusion and affirmative action and to equal opportunity policies and practices. As an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Employer we will not discriminate against minorities, females, protected veterans, individuals with disabilities, or on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.*