Presidential Profile

The Board of Trustees and Presidential Search Committee invites applications for the position of President of Isothermal Community College.

Isothermal Community College (Isothermal) was founded in 1964 as a member of the North Carolina Community College System. Isothermal is located in the foothills of western North Carolina, and proudly serves the education and training needs of the citizens of Rutherford and Polk counties. The College is a comprehensive, two-year public higher education institution. Isothermal enjoys strong local, regional and statewide support from governmental entities, education partners, health care providers, business and industry leaders, and civic and cultural arts organizations. It receives generous philanthropic support through the College’s Foundation. Significant public and private investment and support over the past 56 years has enabled Isothermal to deliver approximately 90 courses of study in curriculum programs in the Arts and Sciences, Applied Sciences and Engineering Technologies, Business Sciences, Health Sciences and Public Service. In addition, the College offers a full complement of Adult Basic Education and Continuing Education courses and programs, including Allied Health, Public Safety, and Emergency Medical Services. The institution is fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to offer associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates, and provide skills certifications and industry recognized credentials.

The College offers licensure programs approved by the State Board of Nursing, the North Carolina Criminal Justice Educational and Training Standards Commission, and the State Board of Cosmetic Arts. Isothermal provides accessible, affordable and inclusive education, training and student support services, cultural arts and entertainment through a world-class Performing Arts venue and award-winning public radio station, and business and industry support through customized training. This is accomplished in locations convenient to students throughout the service delivery area, including an extensive 181-acre Rutherford Campus in Spindale; health care and continuing education programs at the Rutherfordton Learning Center; and a variety of life-long learning classes, equine studies, massage therapy, and adult high school equivalency at the Polk Campus in Columbus. The College also partners with the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) in Asheville to provide lab and clinical space for a Dental Assisting Program with classroom instruction provided at the Polk Center. Finally, Isothermal delivers college-level courses to high school students in both Rutherford and Polk counties, hosts the Rutherford Early College High School, and supports the Polk County Early College. The 2020-21 total enrollment is 2,202 full-time equivalent students in curriculum, continuing education and basic skills courses and programs, with an annual unduplicated curriculum and continuing education headcount enrollment in excess of 5,500 students.

The mission of Isothermal Community College is to improve life through learning by providing innovative, affordable educational programs and inclusive opportunities for personal, professional, economic and cultural development. The guiding imperative that drives the governance, executive leadership, and faculty and staff of the institution is doing all things possible to help students learn. The College mission and motivation to facilitate student learning are reflected in the College’s Strategic Plan.
and it learning college philosophy. The Strategic Plan contains multiple areas focused upon student success, including creating an educational environment to produce a 21st century workforce; improving student achievement through engaged, active learning; nurturing partnerships for students with business and industry; removing barriers that impede academic completion to ensure students are job and college transfer ready; and establishing and fostering relationships with secondary and post-secondary institutions to create seamless pathways for college completion. Isothermal strives to prepare its student learners for success in careers, further education, and personal enrichment.

Isothermal Community College prides itself on its excellence, affordability, and accessibility. It has received several statewide and national recognitions and with its Powers Endowment and other available scholarships, every resident of Rutherford and Polk County can receive free tuition. It has significant community support as demonstrated by many public-private partnerships, which support students, the economy, and the community.

The Role of the President

The President serves as Chief Administrative Officer of the College. The President is appointed by and reports directly to the Board of Trustees, and has an understanding of and appreciation for the principle of shared governance. As Chief Administrative Officer, the President is responsible to the Board for providing sound educational leadership, demonstrating a commitment to student success, effectively overseeing the management of fiscal affairs and equitable allocation of funds, and an ability to build consensus with public and private partners and diverse communities throughout the service area. Similarly, the Board looks to the President for guidance and counsel in pursuit of the College’s mission, implementation of the Strategic Plan, opportunities and risks that the institution faces, innovations in instructional programs and learning modalities, support services that foster academic success, economic and resource development, and the introduction of policies, procedures and activities that serve the best interests of the institution and its students.

The role of the President encompasses varied internal and external duties and responsibilities. The President builds a team of strong and effective leaders, assembles and supports a well-credentialed and accomplished faculty, and directs a compassionate and supportive staff of dedicated professionals. In addition, the President is an ambassador for the College, working with local, regional and statewide leaders and organizations in building support for the institution, and being visible in and engaged with civic and cultural organizations and business and industry. These duties and responsibilities are accomplished in part by:

- Exercising strong communication and interpersonal skills with and between the Board, faculty, staff, students, and members of the College community across Rutherford and Polk counties; collaborating on programs and projects that serve the interests of all student learners; and building consensus support for the financial needs of the institution.

- Providing leadership for creativity in the development and delivery of new academic programs and continuing education courses; promoting student engagement, retention and completion strategies; stimulating expansion of a pool of skilled labor for the workforce and economic opportunity; and advancing facility construction, renovation and utilization.

- Demonstrating an ability to coalesce individuals and groups around College challenges and opportunities, initiating problem-solving strategies and conversations, and making sometimes difficult decisions that protect the mission, vision and purposes of Isothermal.
Opportunities and Challenges

The next President of Isothermal Community College will inherit an institution that has enjoyed excellent Board governance, experienced executive leadership, dedicated employee service with a passion for student growth and development, and strong community support throughout its history. The President will be singularly positioned to collaborate with the Board, employees, students and community members in the development of policies, procedures and processes to engage the challenges and opportunities that the College not only currently faces, but those it anticipates in the coming years. As President, the next administrative leader of Isothermal will be expected to protect the institution from external interference, while building trust within the College and generating assistance from the community in fulfillment of enrollment growth, program offering, and financial support opportunities, and in resolution of policy, operational and technology challenges. The Board and College community sees the following as imminent opportunities and challenges:

- In fulfillment of the College’s mission to improve life through learning, utilize strong education, business, and community partnerships to grow enrollment throughout the service area of Rutherford and Polk counties by offering academic and workforce readiness programs that excite both traditional and non-traditional students, leading them to successful college transfer or gainful employment opportunities. Increase the awareness of educational options, delivered by the College through multiple teaching and learning modalities, including both on-site and on-line alternatives, that through marketing and outreach communicate Isothermal is the first and best choice among post-secondary education institutions in the western region.

- Partnering with the Board of Trustees, the Isothermal Foundation, governmental and private entities, to enhance and make available financial resources to facilitate academic rigor and maintain instructional excellence, and provide students with the tools of and spaces for learning, including industry standard equipment, access to technology, laboratories and workstations, and new and repurposed facilities and learning environments. Strong executive leadership and supplemental funding is required to professionally develop, retain and reward the institution’s most valuable resource within the reach of students – College employees.

- In a post-pandemic learning environment, explore ways and means that renew the College’s commitment, as illustrated in the Strategic Plan, to support student success. Isothermal has pledged and is actively engaged in removing barriers that impede student progress, provide students with financial support, establish academic and employment pathways, and foster their growth and development. As the College reopens its doors to current and prospective students, it must devote its human and fiscal resources and to assist them in pursuit of their educational goals.

Experiences, Skill Sets and Personal Characteristics

The Isothermal Board of Trustees and Presidential Search Committee, with participation from the College community and citizens across the service area, has identified and established the experiences, skill sets and personal characteristics it seeks in its next President. The Board and College first seek an individual who will establish residence in the service area and become a long-serving and engaged member of the community. They should be cognizant of the important role that Isothermal fulfills in its educational, economic development, and cultural mission in the lives of people in rural Western North Carolina. In this regard, the President should concern themselves with the well-being, enrichment and
success of every individual that enters the open doors of opportunity that the College provides. The next President should have the requisite experiences, skill sets and experiences that the Board has established to meet the College’s opportunities and challenges, including:

- Being a strong and responsible leader, with an ability to communicate effectively with both internal and external individuals and audiences across the campus and throughout the community. The President must possess and practice good public speaking and listening skills, and be able to inspire and motivate faculty, staff, students and community members in support of the mission and vision of the College. In doing so, the President should be able to effectively speak about the needs of the institution, its ability to provide multiple education, training and support services, and be an ambassador for the College locally, throughout the region, and at the highest levels of government.

- As head of a post-secondary institution, the Board seeks a President who embraces opportunities for new instructional programs and workforce training that serve the educational and economic interests of both Rutherford and Polk counties and their citizens. This includes a proven record of academic excellence and emotional intelligence that lends itself in support of the faculty, connecting to business and civic communities served by the College, developing and nurturing partnerships, and using sound judgement in decision-making that reflects the best interests of the College and its students.

- Exploring and leading the institution in innovative engagements and new directions as the region expands, while keeping the College rooted in its community values and commitment to excellence. This includes responding to employer requests for skilled workers in health care, education and public services, while delivering world-class performing arts and public radio.

- Experience working with a Board of Trustees, understands the principle of shared governance, was involved and participated in the accreditation process, possesses strong fiscal management skills, engaged in economic development projects, has worked on strategic and facility planning activities, and worked in a comprehensive educational institution.

**Qualifications**

An earned doctorate from a regionally accredited institution and a minimum of five years of successful senior-level administrative or academic administrative experience, or should possess a minimal credential of a Master’s Degree from a regionally accredited institution, or a minimum of ten years of successful senior-level administrative or ten years of academic administrative experience. For all candidates, experience in the delivery of educational services and an understanding of North Carolina community colleges is preferred.