

THE MITCHELL INSTITUTE
Executive Director Position Description
Portland, Maine
October 2011

The Mitchell Institute, a non-profit educational organization located in Portland, Maine, is soliciting applications for the position of Executive Director. Established in 1994 by Senator George J. Mitchell, the organization serves students throughout the state through its scholarship and educational research program.

The Mitchell Institute: Overview

The Mitchell Institute awards a \$6000 scholarship to a senior in each of Maine's 128 public high schools on an annual basis. To date, more than \$8.2 million in scholarships have been awarded in support of 1,800 Maine students as they pursue a college degree. Mitchell Scholars are selected on the basis of academic potential, community service and financial need.

Though primarily a scholarship organization, the Mitchell Institute provides a wide variety of services related to its principal mission. Mitchell Scholars are predominantly first-generation students and as such face barriers to college access and success. The organization uses a "high-touch" model which provides frequent outreach, support and resources to its scholarship recipients throughout their four years of college and beyond. The supports range from the programmatic - leadership retreats, community service opportunities, summer stipends for career-related work, conferences on career exploration; to the highly personal - reviewing individual Scholar/Alumni resumes, serving as connector between Scholars/Alums and potential employers, writing graduate school recommendations, visiting over coffee to discuss future plans. The organization works to connect current Scholars and its growing body of Alumni so that they can serve as resources to one another. A recently created Alumni Council is designed further develop efforts in this area.

While the Mitchell Institute's work is focused on the individual student, a broader view of the organization's role provides deeper context for its work. For example, a longitudinal study of Mitchell Scholars and Alumni to learn about their experiences and outcomes is managed by a full-time staff person. Furthermore, the organization routinely engages in high-level, public-policy research on issues of importance such as removing barriers to college for Maine students, and demonstrating the inextricable link between an educated workforce and a vibrant economy; macro-level work that is critical to the organization's long-term focus on improving Maine's economic vitality through the development of a more highly educated workforce. As a result, many of the interactions with Mitchell Scholars are designed to create relationships and raise awareness of opportunities that exist in Maine. This combination of student-centered work, multiple supports and high-level research can help inform national models for effective scholarship programs and for economic development.

The Mitchell Institute is very involved with the National Scholarship Providers Association and maintains a national reputation of excellence. Its approach of ensuring strong personal connections and support for its scholarship recipients while participating in and informing public policy discussions uniquely positions the organization in the State of Maine and beyond as a resource on matters of student aspirations, educational attainment and economic development. Furthermore, the continued personal involvement of Senator Mitchell in providing vision to the Institute's efforts and critically important support for its cause ensures its continued growth.

The Mitchell Institute operates with a staff of six, and an engaged and motivated board of about twenty. An endowment of approximately \$22 million supports its annual scholarship awards, with funds for program, research and operations raised on an annual basis.

Executive Director: Qualifications

The Mitchell Institute seeks an individual of exceptional talent, energy and drive to lead the organization to the next level, including a determined focus on raising the funds needed to dramatically increase the scholarship endowment and the amount of the scholarships; to achieve long-term stability of resources for program, research and operations; to offer outstanding and innovative support to its scholarship recipients and Alums, including development of new and creative ways of deepening connections with them; and to ensure that the organization's research enhances understanding of the experiences and outcomes of scholarship recipients and continues to be at the forefront of critical thinking and policy development related to educational attainment in Maine.

The organization seeks an individual with a minimum 10 years of experience in leadership roles including staff management and organizational strategy. The successful candidate will have demonstrated a high level of recognition and achievement in his or her prior positions. The Executive Director frequently serves as the public representative of the organization, and its broader mission, and as such is expected to possess superior oral and written communication skills. While a background in scholarships, financial aid or education is not required, the Executive Director must be prepared to acquire sufficient knowledge in the areas to serve the Mitchell Institute with distinction. Of critical importance to the organization, the Executive Director must connect easily with young people and have energy and capacity to advocate for them both individually and collectively. The Executive Director must be flexible, creative and willing to work in a changing and growing environment that relies on a team of individuals working independently. The Executive Director reports directly to the Board of Directors. A minimum B.A or B.S. is required, with preference Master's level or higher.

Executive Director: Responsibilities

The Executive Director of the Mitchell Institute is responsible for the overall management of the organization with an emphasis on growing the endowment and amount of the scholarship award. Responsibilities include developing goals for the organization and overseeing their implementation; interacting with the Board of Directors, providing them with information and acting on their decisions; supervising staff and managing human resource issues; keeping Senator Mitchell informed of the work of the organization and supporting his activities to promote it; and, performing such outwardly directed activities as needed to develop public awareness of the organization, its goals and principles.

Specifically, the Executive Director is responsible for the following:

- ◆ Develop Organizational Goals/ Plans and Oversee Implementation:
 - Provide leadership and support, working with Development, Research and Scholarship Programs staff and their respective Board Committees to set goals, develop programs/plans, and ensure their implementation;
 - Review goals, programs/plans and implementation for reasonableness, ambition/achievability, and cohesion, and establish metrics to measure their progress and success;
 - Interact with Scholars, Alums and programs in ways that advance the mission of the organization; and,
 - Routinely step back from supervision of individual projects and staff to focus on principal/overarching goals of the organization, suggesting changes of emphasis, parameters of projects or implementation plans if needed.

- ◆ Report to Board of Directors and Act on Board Decisions:
 - Oversee preparations for Board meetings and follow-up;
 - Report directly to Executive Committee, highlighting issues for its consideration and decision, making recommendations as needed;
 - Work with all committees of the Board, with special attention to Development, Investment and Finance Committee activities; and,
 - Interact directly and frequently with Board President on all matters related to the organization.

- ◆ Supervise Staff and Manage Human Resource Issues:
 - Stay apprised of goals, programs and plans within each function, collaboratively establishing measures of progress and success;
 - Foster an environment of collegiality and teamwork, involving staff in projects outside their areas of principal responsibility as needed;
 - Provide support and encouragement to staff; recognize successes;
 - Ensure that staff members have the tools and information necessary to work to their highest potential;
 - Conduct semi-annual staff evaluations; and,
 - Keep staff informed of personnel policies, making modifications as directed or approved by the Board.

- ◆ Support to Senator Mitchell in his efforts to promote and grow the organization:
 - Prepare and transmit periodic updates of organizational activities;
 - Support his efforts to grow the organization's endowment; and,
 - Work with him and members of the Board of Directors to further its interests.

- ◆ Outwardly Directed Responsibilities
 - Raise awareness of Mitchell Institute goals and achievements with general public and policy makers, serving as its spokesperson and principal representative;
 - Develop knowledge and understanding of higher education issues in Maine and nationally;
 - Participate in activities and organizations that will help foster growth of the Mitchell Institute as an organization; and,
 - Identify opportunities for the Mitchell Institute to be involved in education and access issues beyond the scholarship program.

The Mitchell Institute is an equal opportunity employer.

For more information visit www.mitchellinstitute.org or contact cquint@mitchellinstitute.org. No phone calls please.