100 Doors to Success

Transylvania University Mentorship Program

**Purpose:** Provide Transylvania University students with a mentor who will assist in preparing them for the adjustment to professional life upon graduation from Transylvania University. This guidance will raise student awareness about the value of a liberal education in professional life, help students think creatively to find meaningful careers that carry forward their liberal arts education, and assist students in building a professional network to help navigate their way in the workforce.

**Process:** Transylvania University will recruit 100 mentors from its dedicated and successful alumni base in the Lexington area. Each mentor will be assigned three Transylvania first-year students as mentees. Mentors will meet with their mentees in person at least three times each academic year and continue dialogue with mentees online throughout the year. Transylvania will provide a platform for this interaction so that mentors and students can benefit from the conversations and insights of their peers in the program.

*100 Doors to Success* will be piloted in the fall of 2014 with the incoming class. Professional training will be provided for mentors to ensure they properly understand their role and have techniques for effectively engaging students. Assessment measures will be developed and implemented to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Deana Ison will administer the program. She will be responsible for maintaining all information and fielding and responding to all questions relating to the mentorship program. Her office will be in the Alumni and Development building, and she will work closely with Career Development.

**Rationale:** Transylvania University is committed to maintaining its identity and its mission as a leading liberal arts institution. Liberal arts institutions are coming under increasing pressure to demonstrate value in the marketplace and meet the narrow expectation of immediate economic returns on tuition investment. While these are legitimate concerns that all institutions of higher education must address, the responsible response cannot be to diminish the quality of education that has been the hallmark of Transylvania University for more than two centuries. *100 Doors to Success* simultaneously preserves and strengthens our academic commitment to a robust and deep liberal arts education while preparing students for post-baccalaureate opportunities that carry forward their liberal education in meaningful and fulfilling ways.

*100 Doors to Success* utilizes a couple of Transylvania’s most distinctive strengths: its location in the city of Lexington and its committed alumni. Lexington has a thriving professional workforce, which is heavily populated by Transylvania graduates. The large number of successful Transylvania graduates is a testament to the quality of a Transylvania University education. The commitment to Transylvania University among its alumni is a strength that speaks to the overall quality of the student experience at Transylvania University. *100 Doors to Success* enables committed alumni to become involved in the life of the school in a meaningful and systematic way to the benefit of our students and the entire Transylvania community.
100 Doors to Success also helps to preserve the primary mission of Transylvania: academic excellence in the liberal arts. In deepening our ties with Lexington, preparing our students for post-baccalaureate opportunities, and providing alumni opportunities for deeper engagement, the mentorship program also enables faculty to focus on the content of their subject matter and pedagogy. Too many institutions turn solely to members of their own on-campus communities to support career advising. 100 Doors to Success will enhance the ability for faculty to perform their primary roles in student development and formation as teachers and academic advisors. By providing faculty the space to focus on their primary roles, Transylvania is taking an important step in preserving and strengthening our identity as a leading liberal arts institution. The relationships built by faculty surrounding curriculum and course content will now be augmented with enhanced alumni connections, providing students with a network of contacts.

Finally, one of the biggest threats to liberal arts colleges is the reduction of education to professional training. A liberal arts education is valuable in its own right. Transylvania cannot lose sight of the value of the liberal arts above and beyond their application to the marketplace and careers. A liberal education enhances the quality of human life by putting students in touch with their highest aspirations. In the process, it helps them find the inner confidence and self-awareness to pursue them. These benefits are not reducible to formulas that calculate a simple monetary return on investment. In order to be a leading liberal arts institution, Transylvania University must preserve the highest aspirations of a liberal education while at the same time preparing our students for professional success. By engaging alumni to supplement the academic work of our faculty and students, 100 Doors to Success is an important step in preserving the academic integrity of a Transylvania education.

Seamus Carey
President