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Dear Western Carolina University Search Committee-

I am writing to express my sincere interest in the position of Dean of the College of Business at Western Carolina University (WCU). The position is of interest to me, in part, because we are interested in settling in the region. Having experienced a variety of locations in the country, our considered preference is to settle in a location close to mountains, and a slightly more rural location. WCU's unique location is ideal in both respects. In addition, I have family in Louisville, and would appreciate being closer to them.

I am currently serving as Associate Dean of the College of Business at Bryant University. Prior to taking that position, I was the Associate Dean of the College of Business and Chair of the Accounting Department at Idaho State University. In addition to the qualifications listed in my curriculum vitae, I would like to highlight a few of my accomplishments that may be of particular interest.

Collaborative Leadership

At Bryant University, I led the launch of Bryant's first online degree program, the Professional MBA. Because of the online format, many faculty initially expressed reservations. In response, I attended department meetings to listen as well as share a vision for the program, met extensively with department chairs and with individual faculty to discuss course content and address concerns. In addition, I coordinated a marketing plan with our University Relations Team. I hired key staff members to work with faculty on the development of their online courses and trained extant staff to support PMBA students. I worked with department chairs to identify faculty to teach relevant courses. I also participated personally by teaching a course in the program. As a result, the institution has embraced the PMBA program, and it has been tremendously successful. The PMBA is now Bryant's largest graduate program with over 100 students within its first year. It even received unexpected early national recognition, being ranked ninth among online MBA programs by collegeconsensus.com. The program has been profitable in its first year, even with startup costs, and is expected to generate significant revenue for the College of Business moving forward. The program's launch has been referred to as a model for future program launches at Bryant. As a result of this success, Bryant has allocated more resources for the growth of the PMBA program and for the development of other online programs.

Another example of collaborative leadership is my experience dealing with another of our growing graduate programs, the Master of Professional Accountancy (MPAc). A year after my arrival, Bryant hosted a near-record number of students in this program in Fall 2019, due in part to an influx of international students. In order to prepare for their arrival, I coordinated with the Accounting Department Chair, our MPAC Coordinator, MPAC faculty, staff from our Office of International Affairs, our Vice President of Student Affairs and the Provost and Dean. The result was a welcome week for all international students, coordinated housing and transportation and additional academic preparations such as tutoring.

A final example of collaborative leadership is my experience with AACSB accreditation reports and visits. I have taken leadership roles in writing and defending accreditation reports (I wrote Idaho State University's Accounting Report in preparation for its 2016 visit and assisted in hosting both of Idaho State University's AACSB review teams in 2016, as well as Bryant's review team in 2018—all with

successful outcomes). However, implementing AACSB standards and ideals cannot be achieved in a vacuum. I designed an efficient Assurance of Learning System at Idaho State University through an iterative process of soliciting faculty feedback and regular effort and reports from faculty to close the loop. In addition, I have reviewed and provided feedback on the comprehensive AOL system at Bryant. With new standards expected to be adopted this year, up-to-date knowledge of AACSB standards is essential. I have worked hard to review these proposed standards, and will work to ensure adoption and broad buy-in from faculty and staff at WCU.

Management and Administration

I make every effort to put students first. As a result, when new resources are available, the first step is to invite faculty to share their ideas for allocating resources in ways that benefit students. One example of a faculty-led idea that I assisted with is Bryant's new Cryptocurrency Club. Another example of deploying resources in ways that benefit students came when, in an effort to keep class sizes down and improve student experiences, I secured extra funding from the Provost to allow for extra sections of graduate courses. Similarly, I recently worked with our travel partner to accommodate a growing number of part-time MBA students who expressed interest in Bryant's Global International Experience trip to Panama. I led the 9-day trip, which included 64 MBA students all together. Leveraging When resource allocation decisions have to be made, my initial question is, "what will benefit the students?"

I also prioritize resource allocation for faculty benefit. For example, I have allocated resources to encourage conference travel for faculty, to subscribe to the Wharton Research Database Service (WRDS) and other relevant databases, and introduced research grants for research active faculty. Furthermore, I introduced a research speaker series in which world-class external researchers were invited to present their work in order to help grow our culture of scholarship at Idaho State University. I have also allocated teaching-related resources including teaching assistants, and conference travel for instructional development.

In conjunction with the Dean, I currently provide annual feedback to over seventy faculty. I am also responsible for providing feedback to the staff positions that report directly or indirectly to me. In these communications, I work very hard to carefully review the relevant teaching, research, and service materials of each faculty (and staff) member so that the feedback is accurate and meaningful. Although time consuming, this process allows me to identify not only opportunities for improvement, but also high performers. For example, in my review of Digital Measures this past year, I noticed a faculty member who quietly had *sixteen* quality publications in a single academic year.

In my role as Department Chair at Idaho State University, I was responsible for rebuilding the Accounting Department. While there, I chaired five search committees, which resulted in five successful hires and as of this writing, one hundred percent retention. This past year at Bryant, we made diversity a priority in our hiring, resulting in seven faculty hires across the College with strong gender, ethnic and cultural diversity (five out of seven female hires; seven different countries of origin). Most notably, I was instrumental in the recruiting of Bryant's Inaugural Rowe Professor of Data Science from the University of California-Berkeley.

In terms of resource allocation, I believe in transparent, organized communication in which priorities are outlined, and policies are followed with consistency. One example of this is the allocation of summer classes. As Department Chair, I introduced a clear rotation system. I drafted a document outlining the process, solicited feedback from faculty, revised the document, led a discussion, made additional changes and held a vote in which the system was approved unanimously.

Western Carolina University has a strong reputation for being student-centered, and my goal as Dean would be to build on that by working to allocate resources in a consistent and clear way that would eliminate ambiguity, put students first, and also provide the resources faculty need to engage meaningfully as part of a community of scholars.

Western Carolina University has potential to continuously improve, in part, by growing both its enrollment and its revenue. I believe keys to success for WCU in the near future include a focused marketing effort that carefully considers ROI as well as an increased emphasis on student retention and graduation. Furthermore, as Dean, I would work with faculty and staff to emphasize diversity within faculty, staff and the student body.

Development

While at Idaho State University, I formed the Inaugural Accounting Leadership Board. This board was selected from prominent alumni and business leaders in the area with whom I formed relationships of trust. Every individual I met with agreed to serve. During my first year, Idaho State's Accounting Department received over two hundred thousand dollars in donations. As Associate Dean at Bryant, I helped to establish a Dean's Council, meeting with prospective Council Members. I have since worked with the board to engage them in meaningful ways on initiatives such as program reviews and engaging Board Members to recruit particularly qualified prospective students.

At both Idaho State University and Bryant, I have been assigned to meet with donors and prospective donors, including soliciting donations. I have been responsible for stewardship reports and follow-up conversations with major donors. Most notably, at Idaho State University, I worked on the initial stage of a capital campaign to promote a new building for the College of Business. Before I left, we received over six million dollars in soft commitments. Additionally, I was a key author in writing the proposal for a prospective lead donor in the campaign. The response to the campaign was overwhelmingly positive, with over ninety percent of prospective donors expressing willingness to commit to the project.

Western Carolina University has tremendous potential for future fundraising and external partnerships given the success of its graduates and its rich history. As Dean, I would 1) exhibit WCU ideals in meetings with alumni, prospective donors and members of the community, 2) work to earn the confidence of the faculty and staff, and 3) work in close collaboration with the Provost and President to achieve shared goals.

I believe that Western Carolina University has a very bright future, and I hope to have the opportunity to be a part of it.

Warm Regards,

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