

September 26, 2022

Dr. Richard Wueste, Executive Search Consultant, AGB Search
Dr. Beverly Warren, Executive Search Consultant, AGB Search
Emporia State University
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Search Committee

Dear Dr. Wueste, Dr. Warren, and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Search Committee,

I am submitting this letter as my application for the position of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Emporia State University, as announced in Chronicle of Higher Education website. Described below are my qualifications that, I believe, make me the ideal candidate for Provost/VPAA at Emporia State University (ESU). I have reviewed the *ESU Strategic Plan: The Adaptive University for 2015-2025* and have great experiences that would allow me to be an asset at ESU. My curriculum vitae (attached) documents my academic and administrative experiences in higher education. Kindly allow me to elaborate on them.

Administrative/ Executive experience: Currently, I serve as Professor of Kinesiology and teaching four classes. I have served as Associate Athletic Director of Student-Athlete Excellence and as Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) at ULM. Prior to this position, I served as Dean, College of Education and Human Performance (CEHP), Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK) for twelve years. I served as the Associate Dean, CEHP; Chair and Graduate Coordinator for the Department of Health and Kinesiology; as well as Interim Chair and Doctoral Coordinator for the Department of Bilingual Education. I have served and continue to serve on several university, college, and departmental committees addressing administrative, academic, compliance and athletic issues. Recently, I completed my tenure as the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) representative on the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) national board. I am very passionate about serving my community and have always aspired to improve the culture and status of every institution I have been involved with.

I understand the important role faculty have in higher education, coming through the ranks from graduate assistant to becoming a Vice President for Academic Affairs. I have been a member of the Faculty Senate, as well as the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. I strongly believe in **shared governance** which I believe is at the forefront of good solid relationship between administration, faculty and staff. As Vice President for Academic Affairs, I was responsible for overseeing five colleges, 345 faculty, 125 staff with a \$45.5 million-dollar budget. As Dean, I was responsible for daily operations of three academic departments with 45 faculty and 15 staff members.

My experiences have prepared me for this endeavor. One important role that I have shouldered which corresponds closely with compliance at the university level was serving as a member on **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** for the Protection of Human Subjects. Through my work on the IRB, I am very acquainted with policies and procedures of research. I am thoroughly familiar with the higher education practices and policies.

Build Enrollment and Strengthen an Environment Focused on Student-Centered Success: At ULM, our enrollment has been steady. With an emphasis on health sciences, the addition of Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) will have a positive impact on enrollment at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This year, our graduate enrollment increased to over 1,500 students which has been an all-time high. We continue to have a retention rate of 74% which is an outstanding accomplishment for the area and region we serve. A traditional campus with first-generation students attending college, a retention rate of 65% is good, so we are doing an outstanding job at ULM. We are in preliminary conversations about partnerships with Louisiana Delta Community College System and other local community colleges to increase student achievement through MOUs.

At TAMUK, the CEHP grew in enrollment from 1,000 to approximately 1,500 students at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. The College had grown in enrollment for three consecutive academic years, with an enrollment growth of 5.6 % per year the last four years. Our retention rate increased from 44 to 70.9% which was due to high impact practices such as writing intensive courses, undergraduate research, study abroad program and

service learning, early identification and communication with at-risk students, and academic recovery programs. Our semester credit hours and weighted semester credit production increased by 25% which was due to our student enrollment increase and our strategic advisement.

Curriculum, Review, Program Development and Distance Learning: At ULM, we have added the following programs: Ph.D. in Pharmacology; Master's in Music Education; Bachelor of Arts in Music, graduate certificates, and started the initial process and received SACS accreditation (Summer 2021) of the **Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT)** program which is scheduled for implementation in Fall 2022.

While at TAMUK, we have introduced the following new academic programs: Sport Psychology (B.S.); Exercise Science Pre-Physical Therapy (B.S.); Sports Management (B.S.); Sport and Leisure Studies (B.S.); Kinesiology (M.S. 100% online); Rural Mental Health Counseling (M.S.); Teacher Education (M.S. 100% online); Educational Administration (M.S. 100% online); Adult Education (M.S. 100% online); Instructional Technology (M.S. 100% online); Bilingual Education (M.S. 100% online, Ed.D. 100% online); Reading (M.S. 100% online); STEM Education Doctoral Transcribed Certificate; and Higher Education Administration Leadership (HEAL) Doctoral Transcribed Certificate. As a result of our work in distance learning, Texas A&M University Kingsville CEHP was **Named 2014 Texas Distance Learning Association Outstanding Commitment to Excellence and Innovation** in Distance Learning by a 4-year University. Overall, we experienced tremendous growth in enrollment, retention, external funding, semester credit hour growth and great community involvement.

Building a World Class Faculty: My prior and current administrative experience has prepared me well for the advertised position. As VPAA at ULM, we currently have approximately 345 faculty with a budget of \$45.5 million. We have instituted policies and have attracted prospective faculty from *Research I Carnegie Classification (Very High Research)* schools that have been a great addition to research and classroom. We have been very strategic in attracting high class faculty to our classrooms. We offer moving expenses, start-up funds and professorships to help them increase their research and classroom capabilities. ULM currently has approximately \$1,200,000 on a yearly basis for professorships and chairs to help with research agendas which has been very productive. Faculty will continue to thrive in the three pillars of higher education: teaching, research and service. We have made a concerted effort to increase diversity, equity and inclusion at ULM and TAMUK.

External Funding: At ULM, we have had an external funding at approximately \$14,500,000 with an outstanding job by our faculty and staff at Office of Sponsored and Research Programs. Our faculty has received grants from the National Science Foundation, National Institute of Health, US Department of Education, state agencies, and local private and public organizations.

When I started my Deanship at TAMUK, the College was at \$375,000 annually in external funding. I understand well the role that a Provost/ VPAA must play in securing external funding for the institution. Under my leadership, grant acquisition thrived in the CEHP at TAMUK. We were awarded a US Department of Education Title V grant in the amount of \$2,750,000 over five years for teacher preparation. And our grantsmanship quadrupled to an average of approximately \$1,675,000 annually. We were the only College in the country that was awarded two Promoting Post Baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (PPOHA) at the same time.

Articulating a Vision for an Emerging University Identity: At ULM, our faculty are training law enforcement and first responders in drone technology, researching potential cures for cancer, setting rogue genes straight, using new technology to tackle ancient riddles, developing material for OSHA on preventing workplace hearing loss, using ULM's LIDAR which is a new tool to forecast dangerous weather, and nursing program preparing the next generation of health care professionals, to name a few. Our faculty at ULM are doing an outstanding job and will continue to do that for Northeast Louisiana and the nation. We currently have approximately \$14.5 million in external funding which will increase in the future with our ever-expanding research capabilities. We have established a great partnership with Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM). We have initiated and MOU with VCOM for research space, IRB agreements and research collaboration in the future. These types of research opportunities will set the sight for the future of ULM. ULM is in great position to improved its Carnegie Classification from R3 (Doctoral/ Professional University) to R2 (High Research Activity) University.

At TAMUK, we partnered up with Premont ISD, a local rural school district that was struggling with academic accountability. The State of Texas Education Agency (TEA) recommended closing the school district and sending students to local surrounding districts. However, in the fall 2013, the Texas A&M University System via Texas A&M University- Kingsville, TEA and Premont ISD partnered to improve the academic performance of the school district. It is believed to be one of the **first partnerships of its kind in the nation**. TAMUK agreed to assist the school district in a variety of aspects, such as school board and academic leadership training, teacher in-services, and data analysis of academic data in order to better serve the students of Premont ISD and thereby, its reputation. The partnership had great start with community support and enthusiasm, as well as local media attention. These past five academic years, Premont ISD was a Met–Standard district by TEA for the fourth time in five years. TAMUK was honored to be part of this partnership that made a difference in the lives of South Texas students. The CEHP at TAMUK received approximately \$10,000,000 in grants for the partnership. And as a result of this partnership, TAMUK proposed an Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement and Success (IDEAS) through the 87th State Legislature. The CEHP grew tremendously during my tenure as Dean and TAMUK was one of the fastest growing universities in the country which was a result of great teamwork.

Serve as the Community/Public Voice: I have been an advocate for ULM and TAMUK. I always attend any community event invited throughout the State and community. I served on the West Monroe Board of Directors. I just completed a three-year appointment on the National Board of the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), based in Washington D.C. I was invited to speak at the State of Texas 85th Legislative Session for Public Education based on the work TAMUK has done with Premont Independent School District. As a result of our work, the 85th State Legislature passed House Bill 1553 which related to permitting a school district that has failed to satisfy performance standards to partner with an institution of higher education to improve district performance. During the 84th Texas Legislative Session, the State signed House Bill 1842 into law which had a provision that allowed school districts to partner with universities to implement a turnaround plan.

I enjoy serving the university and community in a variety of ways. Currently, I serve on community boards and have attended several community functions as an administrator at ULM. I have also served on the TAMUK-Premont ISD Alliance Steering Committee, National Scholarship Task Force, University Advancement Committee, University Leadership Council, University Budget Advisory Council, Enrollment Task Force, and **Intercollegiate Athletics Committee**, all of which report directly to the President of the university. I recently completed training on Council for the Advancement and Support in Education (CASE) Development for Dean's and Academic Leaders. In 2010, I was named Alice (TX) High School Alumni of the Year and I received the Rising Star Award from the Javelina Alumni Association at TAMUK in 2008. Also, I recently completed a very productive two-year term as President, Rotary Kingsville Sunrise Club, and earned a Paul Harris Fellow in 2018. I am an avid official and have received national and state recognition in officiating at the collegiate and high school levels. I have completed five marathons and one ultra-marathon.

ULM recently went through a presidential transition in which I was informed that academic affairs would be going in a different direction. The President asked me to transition to athletics which I gladly accepted and have found to be a great professional experience. I was asked to lead compliance, housing, financial aid and academics for student athletes. It has given more diversification into higher education policies and procedures. Given my academic and administrative experience, together with my service, accomplishments, vision and honors, I believe I am very well-suited to be Provost/ VPAA at Emporia State University, home of the Hornets!!! I look forward to discussing my vision with you. I am confident that I would make a significant contribution to ESU and the community. Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Go Hornets!!!!

Sincerely,



Alberto "Bert" Ruiz, Ed.D.