

January 11, 2019

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU)
Regional Presidents Search Committee

Dear Members of the Regional Presidents Search Committee,

It is a great honor to provide this letter of interest to be one of the regional presidents for the CSCU Community College System. I have the skills, attributes, and experience necessary provide strong collaborative leadership during this time of transition. I would bring a proven record of collaborative change management, improving student success and enrollment, enhancing transparent communication and shared governance, improving relationships and outreach in the community, and supporting active learning. I am open to discussing my fit for any of the three regional presidency positions. In response to the job profile, this letter addresses the specific items outlined in the “leadership competencies” and “qualifications” outlined in the position announcement.

Leadership Competencies

- *Dynamic, entrepreneurial leader with the demonstrated ability to stimulate culture change, develop strategic goals and translate them into action. Experienced administrator in effective operational infrastructure essential to the smooth and effective operation of a college or system. Proven leadership and interpersonal capabilities; ability to collaborate broadly across all levels of the organization, particularly with faculty and staff to achieve results. Demonstrated resilience and flexibility in the face of unexpected constraints. Proven management abilities to implement positive organizational change. Commitment to high ethical standards and values consistent with the mission of the CSCU system.*

Those with whom I work describe me as a dynamic, innovative, and energetic leader. I look toward the future and seek innovation in all leadership opportunities. Providing an overarching vision and supporting employees to move forward with innovation which will help that vision is the key to success. The work I did to manage change at Harrisburg Area Community College's (HACC's) public safety and security department is an excellent example of how my leadership helps to advance an institution. After issues arose with the performance of the area, I was asked to take responsibility for public safety. Through collaborative conversations with employees in the area, a complete review of the department's activities, a review of national best practices, and the engagement of a consultant, I lead the creation of a strategic plan to improve service and emergency preparedness at the college. Through this work, HACC experienced a 12% reduction in crime and a 6% increase in student satisfaction related to public safety.

I have a strong record of establishing collaborative partnerships at community colleges. A culture of mutual respect, an established and agreed upon vision, and an inclusive decision-making process are building blocks for a collaborative environment. I work with all stakeholders to ensure that progress toward a more collaborative environment is a priority. To accomplish this work, I engage in a servant leadership model. One key strategy for building trust is to engage with employees and students at all levels of the organization. I do this by holding meetings with small groups, walking around campuses to check-in with employees and students, and asking for written feedback to questions. I am competent at understanding the needs of stakeholders based upon feedback. I also provide many opportunities for stakeholders to express their questions or concerns in an open way.

One cannot lead if one is not ethical and honest, and I have integrity and ethics in both my professional and personal life. As leaders, we have to be transparent and fair, even when the information we need to share may not be popular or easy to understand. An example of my demonstrating personal integrity and professional ethics, I was pressured by an influential member of the community to hire a friend of theirs into a position at a previous institution. I let this individual know that we would follow the hiring process would be followed and, if the candidate were worthy of being considered, he would rise to the top of the interview list. I did this in a polite and affirming way but still made it clear that special consideration in this type of process is not appropriate.

- *Demonstrated deep commitment to student access and success. Knowledgeable of current educational trends, issues, and challenges for community colleges. Ability to identify opportunities and to convert challenges into innovative solutions and programs that will advance the future of the campuses. Strong leadership skills in strategic planning, fiscal planning and management, and oversight of capital projects. Strong working knowledge and depth of understanding of most areas in a college or university, specifically of the factors that affect net revenues. Experienced in a highly involved union setting; ability to be a persuasive negotiator, facilitator, and collaborator.*

I have been the enrollment manager at four large multi-campus community colleges. I am an expert on how to attract and retain students until they reach their academic goals. Attracting students to the college is accomplished through intentional

and concerted efforts. Creating relationships with community leaders, capturing prospective student information, increasing outreach to high schools, creating innovative recruitment programming, increasing electronic and personal communications to prospective students, and implementing multiple technologies focused on the prospective students, are just some examples of strategies that I have achieved to increase access. During a difficult time for enrollment and student success at community colleges, HACC experienced an increase of 28.9% in admissions applications and an increase of 17.2% in new students during Spring 2016 term. Focusing on overall outcomes related to student learning and success, as well as closing outcome gaps for traditionally underserved students, has been at the core of my academic endeavors (including my Master's capstone and doctoral dissertation) and career. I believe in creating large-scale systems to foster student learning and success. Some examples of student success practices I have successfully implemented include (1) revamping new student orientation and requiring that all new students attend; (2) implementing technology for at-risk student early alert intervention and academic planning support; and (3) creating a course scheduling enhancement initiative to improve student credential completion in a timely manner. As an example of the outcomes experienced in student success, students who engaged with a student success coach were 15% more likely than other students to be retained fall-to-fall. Also, the at-risk student early alert system focused on improving outcomes in gateway courses, and there were improved outcomes in 92% of the identified classes. Finally, over two years the college experienced a 2% improvement in overall fall-to-fall retention.

I also have extensive strategic planning experience. All planning begins with hearing from individuals within the college community to form a shared vision for the future. At my current institution, Portland Community College (PCC), I created and implemented a strategic plan through a year-long effort of listening to stakeholders, reviewing pertinent data, and collaborating with leaders throughout the institution. The Achieving the Dream effort at PCC is the primary driver for strategic planning. I co-lead this effort with the vice president of Academic Affairs and we led the institution to create a healthy plan to improve student success. Everywhere I have work, I was a key contributor to the colleges' strategic plans, created strategic enrollment management plans, and established yearly division strategic plans. These plans ensured that we continued to move forward with short-term goals, so the achievement of long-term goals in the college's strategic plan occurred. Through this long-term approach, which included getting buy-in from many stakeholders, I have been able to achieve a large number of strategic goals. The achievement of these goals also led to positive outcomes, particularly around student learning, student success, assessment, and enrollment.

Converting challenges into innovative solutions and focusing on continuous improvement is necessary to ensure the ongoing success of Connecticut Community Colleges. Supporting team members who are prepared to take risks is a crucial part of my role. Too often, stakeholders are afraid to "think outside of the box" for fear that there will be negative repercussions if the idea does not ultimately create positive results. While risk has to be tempered, it is my job to support entrepreneurial ideas and ensure that they know I "have their back" if things do not go as hoped. As an example of an entrepreneurial idea that I led, the associate registrar at Calhoun Community College worked with me to set up enrollment services at the busiest shopping center in our region. It took a great deal of work to make it happen, but we opened a storefront where students could take advantage of all the steps to enroll. Ultimately, we had nearly 700 students receive services over two months and almost 100 students said they would not have enrolled if we did not have the location. This is a small example of the type of ideas I support as a leader; step out of the ordinary and take some well thought-out risk.

I also have extensive direct leadership experience with shared governance and working collaboratively with highly involved unions. At HACC, I co-chaired the Shared Governance Committee with the president of the Faculty Organization (FO). I was asked to do this because of my effective negotiation skills, my organizational skills, and my ability to work with a team to reach consensus. At my current institution, I actively work with our two collective bargaining units. I am on the management advisory teams for ongoing negotiations with both of the unions and am actively working on full contract renegotiations that will be in place for the next several years. Another example of my engagement with the unions is that I was the executive representative at their summer retreat this year. During my time with the group, we were able to engage in many positive discussions to benefit our students, and improve transparency as well as positive relations between management and the unions.

- *Skilled in outreach and cultivating relationships that support the advancement of the system; comfortable and effective as the spokesperson for a campus, region or system. Proven ability to engage the active participation of external stakeholders, particularly the private sector. Ability to work with elected and appointed public officials in a wide variety of public bodies at all levels of government. Deep understanding of the needs of the community. Experience with raising funds from private, state, and national sources and to articulate to external audiences the value of supporting a college system.*
I have significant experience creating relationships for community colleges with state and national legislators, local business and community leaders, college boards, and leadership from all sectors of education. I am also highly involved as a volunteer in the communities in which I live. For example, in Harrisburg, I served on the boards of the Historic Harrisburg Association, Central Pennsylvania LGBT Community Center, and, local nonprofit theatre, Open Stage of Harrisburg. I also served as president of the Open Stage Board. Through my service to these organizations, I engaged in fundraising activities, provided support to worthy causes, assisted with strategic planning, and created relationships with various key supporters of education in the community.

Expanding the College's resource base is essential to ensure financial sustainability. It is crucial to employ multiple tactics to maximize available resources. My experience includes raising funds for college by (1) working with the College Foundation Board and community leaders to support the college through fundraising; (2) advocating for additional support from local, state, and national government entities; (3) working with local businesses and community organizations to support college efforts; and (4) seeking other alternative sources of funding, such as grants. Some of my specific experience related to private fundraising includes being a member of HACC's Harrisburg Campus fund-raising committee; involvement in capital fundraising activities for a \$10,000,000 renovation to the college's student center; leading various fundraising activities related to a \$2,000,000 fundraising campaign at Open Stage of Harrisburg; and planning fundraising events and making fundraising "asks" for organizations within the communities in which I have lived.

Qualifications

- *Terminal degree plus ten (10) years' experience in developing and implementing innovative, entrepreneurial, approaches to addressing the challenges and opportunities faced by community colleges or higher education organizations of similar complexity. Strong fiscal management skills and a demonstrated ability to grasp budget issues at the system, regional, and campus levels in the areas of instruction, student services, and infrastructure. Equivalent education and experience that meets the minimum qualifications for the position may be considered. Preference for candidates with prior community college teaching and administrative experience.*

I hold a Doctorate of Education in Higher Education Administration from the University of Alabama (UA). UA is a Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredited institution. I also have over eighteen years of full-time working experience at community colleges. Currently, I serve as the vice president for Student Affairs at Portland Community College and report to the college president. For seven years before that, I served as the vice president for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) and reported to the college president. Before this, I was the associate dean of Enrollment Management and Registrar at Calhoun Community College for three years and reported directly to the vice president for Instruction and Student Success. Before my time at Calhoun, I was the director of Recruitment, Retention and Enrollment Services at Chattanooga State Community College (CSCC) for three years and reported to the vice president for Student Affairs. Finally, my first full-time job at a community college was the coordinator of Student Activities and Orientation for four years at CSCC, and I reported to the dean of students.

I have extensive experience developing and maintaining budgets. I have budgetary authority to set and drive the college-wide budget through the enrollment projection process. I currently have direct responsibility for managing a budget of over \$30,000,000 at PCC. During my career, I have used collaborative strategies to conduct multiple reorganizations, cut operational costs, and create various efficiencies to better support student success and drive enhancements in organizational effectiveness. For example, at HACC, I implemented a budgetary process to standardize staffing at all campuses. Leading a committee of various employee types, I reviewed national and state data regarding staffing as compared to student headcount. This allowed us to adjust employee numbers, both up and down, according to the number of students the college is serving, which ensured fairness in staffing across campuses. This created an easily understandable staffing model to create less anxiety as enrollment changes occur. While there are times that it is necessary to reduce expenses, it is also vital to ensure colleges support seeking new dollars and continue to support strategic priorities. Proper support of academic programs must continue to maintain academic integrity and allow for enrollment growth. One example of my allocating additional dollars to support student success was seeking an increased allocation of the college's Perkins funding to support equipment for academic programs as well as student success coaches for career and technical education students.

In addition to my administrative experience at community colleges, I have teaching experience at two community colleges. I taught student success courses at Calhoun Community College and taught foundational studies courses at HACC. I am a believer in the "flipped classroom" model for my personal teaching style and find being able to engage with students in the classroom invigorating and rewarding. I also enjoy staying connected to the classroom to continue to understand the faculty experience.

The information shared in this letter of interest is merely a snapshot of what I would like to share with you. I am an ardent community college leader and believe my skills align with for what you are looking in your regional president. I am hopeful that I will be able to speak with you soon about this opportunity and discuss what I believe we can do together to create a bright future for Connecticut Community Colleges. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Rob Steinmetz, Ed.D.

ROB STEINMETZ

PORTLAND, OR

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Portland Community College

Portland, OR

2017 - Present

Vice President for Student Affairs

- Provide college-wide vision, leadership, and strategic direction related to Student Affairs; areas include admissions, advising, career services, commencement, counseling, disability support services, enrollment services, financial aid and veteran's benefits, intermural and intramural athletics, LINKS (high school and college bridge programs), international student services, Oregon Promise, records, recruitment, resource and retention centers (multicultural, queer, Veteran, and women's), student development, student conduct and retention, student success, and testing.
- Oversee all facets of the college-wide Enrollment Management Plan.
- Co-chair of Portland Community College's Achieving the Dream initiatives.
- Accomplishments include
 - Created new strategic enrollment management and student success model. Within the first several months of employment, reduced expected enrollment decline of five percent to two percent (fall 2017) and experienced flat enrollment the next term (winter 2018). Enrollment trends have continued to be better than state and national averages.
 - Led the creation of a collegewide strategic student success plan with focus areas around equity and inclusion, guided pathways, and data capacity.
 - Successfully became part of MDRC student of Promise programs to inform effective strategies to support Promise students.
 - Realigned budgeting in the division to support established strategic initiatives.

Harrisburg Area Community College

Harrisburg, PA

2010 - 2017

Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

- Provided college-wide vision, leadership, and strategic direction related to Student Affairs and Enrollment Management; areas include admissions, career and transfer services, college pathways (2+2+2), commencement, counseling and academic advising, disability support services, financial aid, intermural and intramural athletics, public safety and security, records, recruitment, registration, student accounts, student development and multicultural programming, student judicial affairs, student success, and veterans affairs.
- Served as co-chair of the Shared Governance Committee.
- Served as a member of Harrisburg Campus Foundation Committee.
- Accomplishments include
 - Implemented a comprehensive plan to improve student success, completion, and enrollment. Outcomes have included in spring 2016 a 28.9 percent increase in admissions applications, a 17.2 percent increase in new students, and an increase in student completion of gateway courses resulting in students having an additional \$148,399 in usable credits.
 - Reorganized the student affairs and enrollment management division to prepare the unit for cutting-edge innovation; enhancements included the realignment of the new student recruitment function, creation of the student and academic success department, creation of professional advisor positions, and centralization of campus leader reporting lines.
 - Improved the performance of the public safety and security department; including the reorganization of the unit, establishment of updated emergency preparedness protocols, and the implementation of over fifty best practice recommendations. As of fall 2015, outcomes include a 12 percent reduction in crime, a 6 percent increase in student satisfaction related to security, and completion of 92 percent of tasks identified in a 2014 study of security effectiveness.

Calhoun Community College

Decatur, AL

2008 - 2010

Associate Dean for Enrollment Management and College Registrar

- Served as the college's enrollment manager and custodian of records.
- Provided leadership and supervision to personnel and functions in the departments of admissions, advisement, international student admissions and study abroad, orientation, records, recruitment, retention, student success courses, and testing.

