

**Farrell J. Webb, PhD**

Western Washington University  
Provost and Executive Vice President Search Committee  
516 High St  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Search Committee Members,

I am writing to formally apply for the advertised opening for the *Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs* at the *Western Washington University*. Currently, I have am in the Office of the Provost as the Provost Administrative Fellow and Professor with expanded duties after having been the Dean and Professor in the College of Health and Human Development at California State University, Northridge (CSUN) for the past six years. Along with my previous experiences as an Associate Dean at California State University, Los Angeles, and my position as Academic Director for Developing Scholars and Bridges to the Baccalaureate Programs at Kansas State University, I have at least 28 years of progressive and complex administrative and academic experience.

I have a rather eclectic academic and public administrative employment history. My background for this position includes, but is not limited to, specific academic training in public policy and administration, work experiences in both public and academic administration, dispute resolution, fiscal management, program implementation, civilian and academic employee supervision—including both undergraduate and graduate students, significant experiences addressing diversity and inclusion issues in all areas of employment. My specific training also includes managerial programs and procedures gained at Harvard University's Management and Leadership Education (MLE) institute and the California State University (CSU) management training consortium consisting of policy and management training by senior executives from various CSUs and the CSU Chancellor's Office.

The job of Dean in the CSU is akin to that of a combination of a university Provost and Chief Executive. The diffused nature of the CSU and the decentralized administrative authority provides the Dean with greater responsibility including direct decisions around hiring, promotion, tenure, retention, college policies and faculty practice. I have made the faculty more reflective of our student body representation through this implicit authority. A CSU Dean of any college, but especially a large one duties and responsibilities, mirror those one would have as a chief executive at a small or midsize college. As such, my skills and abilities are directly translatable to those required of position a chief executive, such as Provost, as it would be at the *Western Washington University*. The College of Health and Human Development employs over 300 full-time and part-time faculty, we serve over 7,200 students and we have nine academic departments offering over 23 degrees (11 baccalaureate, 10 masters, and 2 professional doctorates). I am responsible for four centers that serve the local communities and have provided service hours and support that contribute significantly toward the College's community footprint. I am also responsible for managing a diverse budget of approximately \$24 million, strategic foresight, community partnerships, and continued existence and growth of the College. Additionally, I was responsible for the supervision, management, and oversight for multilevel accreditation processes. There are 15 national accreditations and three certifications for the Centers in the College.

Although my *curriculum vitae* reflects many experiences relative to this position, I believe that a more extensive description of my experience using the position requirements would be of use to the review committee. I have discerned several domains from the job announcement that dovetail with my experiences that I believe underscore my suitability for this position. To that extent, I have structured the remainder of this letter as a *narrationum vitae*, one designed to complement the traditional document accompanying this letter.

### *Strong Management, Planning, and Financial Acumen*

Throughout my work life, I have managed budgets exceeding \$60 million dollars, produced measurable outcome indicators for work-related activities, monitored the progress of programs, and designed and executed assessment processes. Additional experiences as both the PI and program content director have also provided me with relevant administrative and budget experiences. My formal work as a Budget Analyst has provided me with excellent budgeting skills that were only enhanced while I served as an Associate Dean. I worked closely with the Fiscal Officer on the budget and was directly responsible for financial management budget allocations. I am familiar with several types of budgets (e.g., Zero Based Budget, Line Item, Balanced, Incremental, and Value Proposition, the ones we are likely to use in higher education) planning models, and financial tools. I have more than 25 years of experience and skills in budget forecasting, adjustments, and balancing—including backing into budget numbers. I have provided clear, lucid, and cogent explanations of various budget types.

During the past five years I have managed the College's budget and have made strategic decisions to eliminate the College's debt and replenish its budget. I have reduced and/or eliminated unsupported release time. These efficiency methods have saved another \$600,000 dollars. I also reduced the number of low-enrolled courses, resulting in annual savings of about \$1,000,000. I developed programs and strategies that help increase our extramural funding by some 417% over my tenure as the Dean. Although these things have helped, I also discovered a structural element to our deficit. I have been able to get a partial restoration of our structural deficit and expect to right-size the budget that will result in a \$2 to \$2.5 million dollars recovery over the next two years.

### *Issues of Access, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging*

As the Dean I have actively engaged in a process of access, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging throughout my tenure. It is an integral part of who I am, so it is always a part of how I work with others. One example can be seen in faculty recruitment and hiring. I have hired the most diverse faculty pool in the history of the College—members from every major racial and ethnic group have been added to the faculty including LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer) members. In addition, I have also hired international faculty from at least four continents. Despite the legal restrictions in the State of California that prohibit me from directly considering race and ethnicity when hiring, I have found that it was not having BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) or ALANA (Asian, Latinx, African, and Native American) individuals within the hiring pools that generated the problem. What I did was to actively expand our recruiting, reaching out to organizations and institutions that are traditionally not contacted, worked on explicit bias, altered the language of our recruiting materials to be more open and less traditional, and carefully reviewed each hiring pool so that the faculty avoid reproducing themselves in the candidates. This is not only true for the faculty but also for my senior staff which represent various groups and reflect a more diverse and inclusive pool of professionals.

My entire career has focused on addressing structured social inequality, based on my guiding principle of diversity in thought. I have been working with closing the opportunity gap. I have always been an innovator and have tried various interventions throughout my career to enhance the educational experiences of students. My specific example relates to an undergraduate program directed at underrepresented BIPOC/ALANA and poor White students, who can experience opportunity gaps but when lumped in the same group are often not seen. One great success was the development and implantation of the Developing Scholars Program (DSP) while at Kansas State University. The creation of the Developing Scholars Program was born out of the need to ensure that BIPOC/ALANA and underprivileged students from all groups were given a chance to succeed in a large research-based institution. During my 11 years with the program, the four-year graduation rate was 92%. The overall graduation rate was 99% (two students were awarded posthumous degrees) with an average GPA of 3.23, and a median GPA of 3.15. Approximately 80% of the students went on to a wide variety of graduate programs (e.g., MD, PhD, JD, DVM, OD, DDS, DPT, MEd, MS, MA).

#### *Experience Guiding Comprehensive Strategic Plan*

Recently, I have developed the first Strategic Plan ever within the College. The process involved four stages. During the first stage the senior team developed a simple map and process timeline for the project. Stage two involved a two-stage meeting process. During the first general meeting the idea of a strategic plan was introduced to the faculty, staff, and student representatives. They were then asked to list any issues that they desired to see within the College. Every item was then listed and then analyzed. Each item was placed into a series of categories. These items were mapped into five distinct areas.

The process has resulted in a new articulated vision of where we want the College to be positioned, what are the values of the College, and what do we expect from our graduates as they complete our varied curriculums. This new vision has full support from the Chairs, Faculty, Professional Staff, and Staff within our College as well as the Provost and President of the University. The strategic plan originally consisted of four, now six pillars after review and revision as is standard practice in strategic planning over the last two years. Our pillars are: (1) Student Success; (2) Employee Success; (3) Research Success; (4) Reputational Success; (5) Community Relations Success; and (6) Operational and Fiscal Success. These objectives fortify our mission and vision for the College and are directly linked to the University's strategic plan and goals. The components of the Strategic Plan were developed from faculty, professional staff, staff, and even student input into our planning process. The ideas have been revisited, refined, and reexamined, throughout the years. From our collective work we have developed an improved College mission statement that states that we seek *to enhance, empower, and enrich the human experience*.

#### *Support for Programs to Achieve Retention and Degree Completion*

I have worked with the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) and TRIO (e.g., Upward Bound, McNair Scholars, and Gear Up) programs for some 25 years and have mentored more than 200 students during that time. I have also mentored some of the program directors and assisted them in grant writing and report development. Additionally, I worked to enhance minority student representation for some of the more elite programs, such as the Truman and Rhodes scholarships. Here at CSUN, EOP is integrated across the University and has its own budget. At present we are conducting a pilot program with the intent of upsizing the model to the general CSU population. The key is that one must be intentional and value the students in the operation. The CSU has worked to improve the four- and six-

year graduation rates of all students. Our current initiative, Graduation Initiative 2025 established targets improvement across the system. We have made significant progress with retention and graduation rates for our first-time freshman and have already exceed the goals for our transfer students. Although our graduation rates are improving, the equity gaps have not shown the same level of success. My continued presence in higher education and my career trajectory, where I made sacrifices to aid and support students as they sought to obtain their degrees, points to my overall commitment to excellence. I practiced this policy no matter what the area of study for the students, many were in the social sciences and liberal arts.

#### *Calculated Risk to Benefits Initiatives with Sound Decision Making*

As an administrator I have had to work within some boundaries but still have managed to make some innovations. For example, under my direction we have created two new degree programs, a Master of Science in Athletic Training (MSAT), and a Doctorate in Audiology (AuD). In addition, I successfully migrated our Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) from state support to self-support saving money but also improving the program, its offerings, and increasing the number of students that we can serve. We are currently developing a doctorate in Public Health (DrPH) which we expect to offer in the next three years.

One significant action included migrating our Accelerated BS in Nursing (ABSN) program from State support to a self-support model. This action saved the College at least \$1.5 million dollars and netted about \$500,000 so far. I have also reduced and/or eliminated unsupported release time. These efficiency methods have saved another \$600,000 dollars.

While serving as an administrator at CSU Los Angeles, I had the pleasure of formulating and hiring a senior advising team that would serve as administrators for four campus hubs. I have also served as senior search committees for the hiring of a Chancellor of Kansas State Salina. In my current job as Dean, I supervised staffs ranging from 3 to 600 people. I have improved the morale and work outcomes for employees in the College, evidenced by the lower attrition rate and improved communications across units of the College. I have also managed to hire several faculty and staff, improve the department's work environment of some troubling units by making changes in management, improving communications, and having better follow-through from the Dean's office.

#### *Commitment to Transparency*

As a leader I value transparency and have worked toward making it a central theme of the work that we do here in the College. Whenever possible, we present the information, we provide our rationale for our decision, and we seek input. As the Dean I have created an executive management team (EMT) that consists of the Associate Dean, the Director of Finance and Operations, and a Faculty Representative whom we have designated as an Administrative Fellow. This transparency has boosted morale, facilitated people getting answers, and help to develop a better sense of how decisions are made and how input is valued and appreciated. We are the only College on this campus with such a mechanism in place.

The COVID19 Pandemic, although devastating and challenging, moved us to generate new ways of doing things. In the College, even before the pandemic's full effects, we were using virtual conferencing tools to communicate ideas about the budget and other important issues that needed immediate updated information. It was important that I deliver the message and that the questions be answered by me as

well. Since the pandemic I have held three Collegewide Zoom sessions per semester where any issues can be discussed. I set up an anonymous website where questions could be submitted. Those were asked in an open forum by the moderator, and I answered them. This method has been met with great support from the faculty and staff.

#### *Approachable, Collaborative, and Inspirational Leadership*

I would say that I am an ethical, reasonable, forthright, fair, honest, caring, empathic, sensitive, individual who has a great sense of humor, appreciates irony, values differences, and honors my ancestors and the values taught to me by my family and mentors. To that extent, these values have given me a strong sense of resilience and a very high level of optimism. The COVID-19 pandemic and my responsibility as a leader have permitted me to call upon me these traits at a very high level, especially in some of the decision making that I was compelled to do during this difficult time.

A standard part of my work experiences includes presenting information to various groups (e.g., policymakers, executives, managers) in multiple venues including the classroom, executive board room, hearing room, courtroom, offices, and public meetings. I have presented policy papers, research findings, budget plans and general topic discussions at well over one-hundred different conferences and formal meetings, both nationally and internationally, and in Spanish and French. As a Dean, I have endeavored to have a very transparent and open form of communication. I find that my training as a clinician has aided me in listening, hearing, and reflecting on the issues and concerns of the faculty, staff, and students before responding. People must know that they have been heard, in fact, it matters more than the answer. I routinely meet with the new faculty and have work meetings with staff over lunch. I keep an open-door policy and am willing to meet with anyone who has concerns or issues.

#### *Unionized Environment and Shared Governance Experience*

My experience working in environments with bargaining units and labor unions has occurred throughout my working career. I have daily interactions with employees across a variety of bargaining units with various rules and regulations regarding their work environments and rights. Currently, we have six employee CSU Bargaining Units (Unit 3 faculty; Units 2, 4, 7, 9 and 11 staff). I have experience working with shared governance and collective bargaining units in a direct manner. Whether it is working on settling a grievance, faculty hires, or implementing new curriculum and management ideas, they have all required that I work closely with and within the culture of shared governance and make certain to adhere to the bargaining unit's rules and regulations. Here at CSUN, the collective bargaining environment is highly valued and protected.

#### *Potential for Success in University Advancement and Fundraising*

My record with fundraising reflects two types, government and private. I have maintained a strong and good working relationship with our division of University Advancement. In fact, we have an advancement officer located within the College and working with him has been very important to our fundraising activities. In terms of corporate and private philanthropy, I am involved in several current gift projects all in various stages. While there are some long-term gifts that are expected, the most important role that I play is being a good ambassador and university liaison for potential donors. So far, since I have been Dean, there has been about \$2.5 million dollars in actual gifts and pledges for approximately \$12 million dollars.

Our new plan for fundraising involves a long-term series of conversations engaging career and financially successful alumni. These conversations are aimed at generating greater interest in the College which we have found helps in improving our fundraising. They are recorded and edited and then placed upon the College's web site for review by all alumni at their leisure. We have had tremendous feedback about the project and have had alumni request to be part of the new program. I have found that in fundraising I am able to connect with donors and stakeholders across a myriad of issues. I have been fortunate enough to do so and am proud to say that I can find common ground with them through my lived experiences and my values of respecting people and accepting them for who they are. My genuine, sincere, and caring personality has served me well in establishing good rapport in forging life-long and meaningful relationship with people. I have solicited and received over \$8 million dollars in external funds via grants from Federal, State, and Local governments throughout my academic career.

#### *Providing Leadership in Teaching, Research, and Program Development*

I have been on a constant campaign to improve both graduate and undergraduate education. To that extent I have worked very closely with my colleagues to expand our curriculum offerings, provided for greater involvement of students in the governance and development of the curriculum. I have also sought funding to support graduate students throughout their careers, this included, but was not limited to, creating small grants, promoting professional development, and spending more direct time with students on their projects, thesis, and dissertations than had been the norm.

My specific academic experiences in leading change in undergraduate and graduate programs involves the development of new program designs, creation of new courses, working with a team to process assessment and review criteria as well as overseeing accreditation and program review related to my specific academic area. I continue to invest in the development of knowledge and engagement of ideals with my students through shared professional activities. I have sponsored students for membership, promoted their participation in conference activities, provided grants to ensure their participation and participated in collaborative projects with students. I am happy to say that these efforts have increased our student output evidenced by higher graduation rates, full-time employment upon graduation, professional publications prior to graduation, and the ability to garner funding for their activities both in and out of graduate school.

Some of the work that I do on behalf of the graduate student recruitment occurs during the undergraduate years. In terms of direct service to underrepresented students I serve as the academic director for the Developing Scholars Program (DSP) for 11 years and the Bridges to the Baccalaureate Program for eight years with last two years as the program director. Both the DSP and Bridges programs are targeted toward first generation and/or students of color. Students are matched with faculty mentors and are required to produce a research outcome for each year. I am responsible for the year-long research seminar designed to teach students academic research and survival skills in large research universities.

#### *Teaching and Program Support*

As a member of the graduate faculty, I have served in a leadership role as major professor as well as supporting faculty to over sixty graduate students from both within and across the University community. I have directed more than twenty dissertations and theses. Throughout my career I have served as a mentor and advisor for graduate and undergraduate students alike, including developing and supporting with well-funded grants to support graduate students as well as working with others to

design and implement an undergraduate research program designed to serve underrepresented students. The programs, known as the Developing Scholars Program (DSP) and Bridges to the Baccalaureate (Bridges) were designed to assist students obtain the necessary undergraduate experiences and degrees to proceed onto graduate school. To date, both programs have been successful at meeting their goals. I believe that the experiences gained in working with these programs can be easily translated to the graduate school environment.

In terms of teaching, I have been fortunate enough to win teaching and service awards while at Kansas State University. Throughout my teaching career I have been nominated for and won several teaching awards, among them, the *Commerce Bank Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching* and the other for specifically mentoring and working with women in science (social sciences) and serving students with disabilities. I have also won the *Commerce Bank Presidential Award for Distinguished Services to Historically Underrepresented Students* (specifically for working to enhance the academic status of graduate students of color). I became the first African American professor in the history of Kansas State University to win three teaching/service awards and one of a few faculty members to have ever done so.

#### *Knowledge of Issues and Challenges in Higher Education*

As a public institution of higher education CSUN faces unique challenges, not the least of them being the continued and sustained funding from the public during these unique times. The challenge is to demonstrate that we are good stewards of the public funds and at the same time show that the return on investment remains high and that it is well worthwhile to continue funding. The problem of government funded stewardship is more unique to publicly funded institutions; however, there are some universal challenges to all types of institutions. There are four important issues that challenge higher education, no matter what size or type of institution. They are: (1) enrollment management; (2) cost control; (3) return on investment; and (4) diversifying the faculty.

The trends in expected population growth and the challenges presented to institutions have made me focus on enrollment management plans and to develop programs that have some clear targeted outcomes. The second issue, cost control is particularly important for institutions that are tuition driven. Institutions must continue to provide quality education but at the same time not out price the very constituents that they need to support the institution. I have learned that firm connections between community partners and donors are critical as cost controls are worked into the overall fiscal plan. The third issue, return on investment, can serve as a mitigating factor when one considers costs in general. My experience has revealed that the return on investment in terms of in-kind services to the community enhances student's life chances. The final issue that higher education institutions face is developing a faculty pool that is more diverse and more representative of the population that we serve. I have discovered that this requires deliberate work on our part to promote students to pursue careers in academia.

#### *Partnerships and Relationships*

The ability to form and maintain relationships with stakeholders is a critical part of any leadership position. To that end, I have been able to, with direct assistance from my Development Officer, foster unique relationships with many of our community partners. For example, we have a partnership with the Los Angeles Dodgers and their foundation. This unique relationship has resulted in sustained scholarships and exclusive year-long internships for our Physical Therapy graduate students with a

professional major league baseball (MLB) team. We also have relationships with corporate and local retailers, for example, Federated Department Stores with their flagship Bloomingdales, along with Saks Fifth Avenue and Macy's who offer internships, scholarships, and specific training to our Fashion and Apparel students.

We also maintain excellent relationships with our community health partners, such as Kaiser Permanente, Common Spirit, and local agencies focused on health care and well-being. Through our Nursing, Public Health, Kinesiology, Physical Therapy, and Communication Disorders and Sciences departments we have numerous connections with a variety of health agencies and hospitals, serving on boards as active participating community partners.

We have partnerships with the Los Angeles County Departments of Health, Parks and Recreation, Economic Development, Housing and Urban Development, and Social Services. In addition, the College maintains a board of community advisors for most of our departments. I maintain an advisory group, the Dean's Circle, composed of many influential community leaders and friends of the College. I have formed many personal relationships with individual alumni and donor friends. These long-term and enduring relationships allowed me to expand the College's funding portfolio. I am proud to say that the formation of these relationships will continue to benefit the College, the University, and our students in perpetuity.

The direct economic impact from these relationships, just in terms of revenue obtained by the College is about \$12 million dollars per year. Our output to the community in terms of in-kind and direct services supplied by our faculty and students is estimated to be about \$400 million dollars conservatively, the estimated contribution by the University to the State, is estimated to be somewhere in the range of \$2.3 billion dollars.

#### *International Orientation and Experience*

I have been involved in maintaining international collaborations with several institutions throughout Asia and the Middle East. Currently we have a three plus one (3+1) program with some institutions in China and send faculty members to Japan and China in exchange on a yearly basis. We host a program of young Japanese students and faculty at least twice a year in our connection with our health sciences, kinesiology, physical therapy, and recreation and tourism management departments. Our faculty is also involved in grants with international organizations focused on improving academic exchanges between our country and other international institutions with similar curriculum. As a result of our mutual collaborations, we have the largest number of international students as a proportion of our college enrollment compared to other Colleges on campus except for the College of Engineering. I have traveled internationally numerous times and have engaged in academic efforts with scholars in other countries

#### *Embracing, Developing, and Supporting Excellence in all Forms*

As a leader, I have always sought to improve the morale and work outcomes for employees in the College. I have also managed to hire several faculty and staff, improve the department's work environment of some troubling units by making changes in management, improving communications, and having better follow-through from the Dean's office. These changes have been met with great enthusiasm from the professional staff. For faculty, I established a professional training seminar for the College where special courses on publishing and writing to assist faculty who needed to publish more to



meet the retention, promotion, and tenure guidelines of their respective departments. We held grant writing workshops that provided instruction and support to faculty and staff who were interested in increasing their productivity through external measures. Since the inception of these programs, publishing went up throughout the college by some 35% and our grant productivity went up 417%. We also established training program grants for staff who seek to obtain additional training. These grants allow them to seek outside training at no cost to themselves.

In terms of students, I support them through a variety of college-based activities designed to keep them actively engaged in the University community whether it be through the athletic team activities or other college-based or university-wide social programs. I also participate as a faculty and administrative mentor in the Black Male Scholars (for both men and women) group at CSUN. The purpose of this group is to provide students with direct access to professionals and to model appropriate behavior for success in the academy and in working toward their life goals.

### *Summary*

My entire career has been devoted to having more than one way of looking at things. In fact, I subscribe to the idea of multiple lenses for everything that I do or propose to others. Experience, and my personal belief system, has taught me that more than one viewpoint is necessary and critical in decision making and problem solving, particularly in higher education where consensus is valued over autocracy. There are far reaching consequences and we must give full consideration and due diligence to these things in decision making processes.

I trust that this letter has provided you with some greater insights into how I fit the advertised needs. I do have the necessary credentials and am well versed in the field that complements the identity of your institution. Thank you in advance for considering my application for the *Provost and Executive Vice President* at the Western Washington University. I look forward to further communications with you regarding my application at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully yours,



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