

TO: Dr. Pamela M. Balch, Senior Consultant and Disa T. Mason, Consultant, Academic Search
FR: Darrell Newton, PhD
RE: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs position at Shippensburg University

Dr. Balch, and Ms. Mason:

Please accept this application letter for the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs position at Shippensburg University. My successful record of leadership, including 30 years in higher education with over ten years of academic administration, makes me an ideal candidate for the position. Further, the preferred skills and experience, as detailed in the search profile, are addressed within the body of my letter.

I serve as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Winona State University, with dual campuses in Rochester and Winona, Minnesota. I previously worked as an associate vice chancellor of Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Wisconsin Eau Claire and as an associate dean, department chair, and full professor at Salisbury University in Maryland, providing me with a successful record of leadership in higher education.

Further, understanding current challenges facing student-centered, engaged public research universities, such as enrollment declines, student debt, and alternatives to the traditional college experience, has been an inherent part of my responsibilities. Despite the lack of a prospectus, below, I discuss how my experiences align with the priorities for this position.

Developing an innovative vision and strategy for academic preeminence, including unique and relevant programs that boost enrollment and provide financial stability.

I have served as an academic to assure and advance educational programs through the years. As a recent example here at Winona, my office responded to the potential needs of adult returners by working with Student Life to develop off-hour advising, online consulting, and adult-themed tutoring, thereby "meeting students where they live." With the cooperation of Adult Continuing Education (ACE) at Winona State, I initiated a systems approach to increase non-traditional student admission through innovative partnerships with our corporate associates.

Through a Qualtrics survey with over two hundred companies in our Career Services database, my office targeted corporations that offered tuition assistance to adult returners, non-traditional students, and those attending part-time, ideally offsetting increased student debt while providing accessibility to more online classes. In support of the MinnState transfer pathways program, our office initiated specialized partnerships with three two-year community colleges that had been traditional "feeder schools" for "two plus two" programming. The desire was to develop a seamless transfer policy between our campuses to increase enrollment and provide students with more significant support. This provision also includes the Rochester campus specializing in graduate studies and the "intent to return" process, allowing adult returners to receive the support needed to maintain their academic development.

After sharing the survey results with the campus, I collaborated with our offices of Admissions and Student Life and with the deans of five colleges to initiate outreach to these corporations to recruit those interested in continuing their educational journey at our institution. While data on the survey's effects is yet to be available, Admissions has eagerly committed to following up with those companies that

responded. At UW Eau Claire, where I conducted a similar study of potential graduate students between 2017 and 2020, a 6% increase in enrollment occurred across all graduate programs.

Also, while at Eau Claire, I supervised the directors of the Academic Skills Center, the Center for Writing Excellence, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), the Honors Program, Intercultural Immersions, and the International Education and Study Abroad program. Further, in collaboration with the Honors program, I led specific departments to establish four-year schedules for colloquia and elective offerings, including those in the Liberal Education Core. My office provided support for STEM programming that encouraged the participation of BIPOC students, with academic scaffolding as a pedagogical practice and demonstrating measurable student outcomes. I also supervised funding through Graduate Studies to develop online classes for English and History graduate programs. I initiated improving the online presence with support from the Integrated Marketing and Communications (IMC) office, eight college deans, and with the aid of one assistant.

As for traditional undergraduate students, data indicated that our students had taken some of their required general education classes from other campuses online. Therefore, I worked with the faculty to form a general education task force that would consider increasing online offerings, encouraging students to take courses from our campus. While certain summer classes were offered online during summer terms, my office worked to create a permanent winter term for various disciplines. We also studied data on online winter courses that had been successful when offered by the Business School. The successful addition of these courses has increased net revenue by approximately 3% from 2021 to 2022.

Due to the departure of an associate vice provost at our Rochester campus, I accepted the responsibility of acting dean of Graduate Studies. Serving in a similar capacity in Wisconsin gave me the experience and an opportunity to collaborate more closely with community groups in Rochester, including the Greater Rochester Advocates for Universities and Colleges (GRAUC) and the Rochester Advisory Board. Through these associations, I started a restructuring process that will better assist in placing mostly adult students into positions within the Rochester community and elsewhere.

As associate dean at Salisbury University in Maryland, I coordinated and served as chair of the interdisciplinary major program (IDIS), including oversight and development of the curriculum. Among other duties, I worked to incorporate global perspectives as a part of the University's mission through the support of faculty-led programs in various international locations, including semester-long internships and opportunities considered fundamental to students' success. Establishing close working relationships with organizations such as the Washington Center and Global Experiences were included. The development and implementation of our foreign language requirement was undertaken with the support and supervision of the chairs of the College of Liberal Arts, as was the launch of the American Studies Track for international students.

As chair, I supported a curriculum reform project that converted all three-credit courses into four-credit courses, increasing student engagement and reducing the overall teaching load for faculty. Other responsibilities included the administration of a four-track discipline of 625 students, recruiting, supervising, and evaluating seventeen faculty members and three support personnel. Assessing student learning outcomes was another responsibility while working closely with academic affairs, the Middle States Higher Education Commission, and the University of Maryland System. I also collaborated with the Maryland Humanities Council to help generate interest in civic leadership for our students. In addition,

reviewing individual academic programs and proposed courses was a responsibility at the University of Maryland System, the UW System, and MinnState, as were curriculum approvals.

Administrative experience with budgeting and financial planning is another skill brought to this position. When considering budgeting and financial planning, my skills include collaborating and negotiating with multiple bargaining units, administering contract provisions, and supervising the institutional planning office to use data to achieve balanced budgets annually. This effort includes managing an associate provost, two associate vice presidents, and five deans at two campuses with a combined budget authority of approximately \$50,000,000. My office also consults with the Student Senate and Student Fee Management Committee to recommend student fees and tuition changes.

As a department chair, I repurposed faculty lines and subsequent resources from under-enrolled programs into those experiencing growth without disrupting student needs or affecting faculty retrenchments. I also served on a campuswide Fiscal Advisory Committee for Strategic Planning and Budgeting. As an AVP, attending the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) conferences provided insights into budget modeling at other institutions. These prior experiences have helped me to maintain financial adaptability but with a commitment to the campus mission. Further training in fundraising came from Harvard's Management Development Program and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) workshops on financial development. I am working closely with our development officer to assist in fundraising for arts, theatre, and music programs. For example, I worked with advancement on the contribution of a historic building by a local family, which allowed us to turn the location into an educational and exhibit space for student art.

Building a strong sense of community by recognizing and supporting dedicated faculty and staff.

When considering my perspectives on faculty and staff support, my dedication to scholarship and personal development within vigorous learning environments is evident in my experience. I encouraged multiple applications from faculty for internal and external grants, primarily through the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. Establishing a Faculty Research colloquium series at three institutions in partnership with the library staff is included, as is highlighting scholarship across the curriculum. I have worked closely with the NEH and created a series of workshops in research grant writing for faculty. I would continue supporting faculty release time to develop innovative programs, conduct research, and attend conferences. Support for advancing teaching and research at all levels, including undergraduate scholarships, has been fundamental in my development as an administrator.

When presented with an organizational challenge, I have examined the circumstances empirically while collaborating with faculty, administrators, students, and often community members. As a recent example, working with faculty and students during the pandemic to "pivot" online through collaborative classroom management, teleworking, and other adaptations demonstrates an ability to lead during challenging times. Other tasks such as enrollment, fiscal health, recruitment and retention, and successful program completion for students with additional challenges have also been successfully undertaken. Outcomes focused on the institution's health and students' development as citizens through academic achievement and civic engagement. Shippensburg's Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 dovetails perfectly with strategic projects I have supported and helped to implement at past institutions.

When considering collaboration through academic endeavors or shared governance, I have a record of working with faculty to accomplish goals far beyond any one college or department. I attend and report

during biweekly meetings with six collective bargaining units on campus to ensure effective communication and transparency. These collaborations have created task forces in course delivery and student success through engagement with multiple groups in various academic settings.

Ensuring the high quality of academic programs through effective use of assessment, accreditation, grant writing, and innovative modalities.

In my current role, I also coordinated the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation visit for November 2021 at Winona State University, which concluded successfully with a continuation of an Open Pathway and ten-year cycle and supervised the self-study for multiple criteria. I recently joined the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Peer Corps to extend my general assessment and accreditation commitment, leading to a Standard Pathway Comprehensive Evaluation visit in the fall of 2023. I also supervise the Institutional and Assessment and Research Services (IPAR) office, which generates reports on enrollment, departmental effectiveness studies, and the Office of Grants and Sponsored Projects.

At UW-Eau Claire, I served as co-chair of the steering committee for an accreditation visit scheduled for fall 2019. Co-wrote the self-study for criteria on teaching and learning: quality resources and support, evaluation, learning, and improvement. Coordination of the measurement and assessment of students' needs and preferences, including identifying appropriate delivery methods and course offerings in response to student demands, were also considered. This responsibility included the identification of student achievement gaps and efforts to enhance retention strategies. The advancement of EDI goals in Graduate Studies through increased AOP graduate assistantships and fellowships was also a responsibility.

While at Eau Claire, a grant from the National Association of System Heads (NASH) Taking Student Success to Scale (TS3) project allowed me to co-direct the building of equitable access to high-impact practices for students from traditionally under-represented groups. The project determined the barriers that prevent students of color from participating in study abroad/immersion, student-faculty research, and internships. With the Institutional Review Board's (IRB's) approval, the team gathered participation data through student focus groups to understand their experiences. Student performance and access were also considerations when heading the Institutional Change Team (ICT) for the UW System Math Initiative, in which I worked with the chair of Mathematics and campus representatives from 14 UW institutions on the revision of statewide enrollment rates in math courses. We streamlined the transfer of credit-bearing gateway math courses, reducing the number of students who need remedial classes.

Embracing and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within all aspects of academic affairs.

As provost, I have worked with Affirmative Action/Equity and Legal Affairs to ensure our institution reaches our strategic Diversity 2030 goals by organizing faculty-led committees seeking to quantify and qualify efforts. These measures included the support of human diversity as an ongoing program goal for our general education courses, including hybrid and online offerings. Having recently lost our diversity officer as a member of the Cabinet, I worked to justify the replacement of this essential position despite budget concerns caused by under-enrollment. While serving as interim dean of Graduate Studies, my office also oversaw the dispersal of fellowships and work-study awards to ensure the success of well-qualified yet diverse students, including "first gens."

Among other initiatives at UW Eau Claire, with a grant from the National Association of System Heads (NASH) Taking Student Success to Scale (TS3) project, I co-directed a team to build equitable access to high-impact practices (HIPs) for students from traditionally under-represented groups. The TS3 project determined the barriers that prevent students of color from participating in study abroad/immersion, student-faculty research, and internships. An assessment plan focused on evaluating equity in learning outcomes, as well.

In addition, as chair of the Communication Arts department, I actively recruited faculty and students of color. I also spearheaded the involvement of the HBCU University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) in coproducing television programming with our institution, leading our dean to request that I serve as an alternate member of the Diversity Committee for the University of Maryland System. A related effort was attendance at graduate studies conferences at the request of our diversity officer. Further, participation included joining search committees seeking candidates of color for tenure-line and administrative positions.

When considering the academic assessment of diversity initiatives, I was co-chair of the Diversity and Globalization Committee for the Middle-States review in 2011-13 and as a Steering Committee member for Academic Excellence during Middle-States 2015-16 at Salisbury University. As a result, I co-wrote a survey and study addressing the impact of multiculturalism on student learning within general education courses. As associate dean, an essential issue was studying academic program practices and their effects on student enrollment, retention, graduation rates, and student services. Allocations included a comprehensive review of programs to meet market demand in conjunction with the University's academic comprehensive plan.

Fostering a culture that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion has been a central focus of my career, along with eliminating equity gaps and progressing toward DEI objectives. As Provost at Shippensburg University, I would continue supporting this vital work and finding the necessary resources to maintain the previously established Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiatives.

In closing, I have honed critical thinking skills essential for problem-solving. Each effort reflects my commitment to student success, shared governance, decision-making transparency, and faculty support. My references can attest to my personal and professional ethics and integrity.

I have encouraged innovative technologies and digital services to help enhance the educational experience and provided subsequent professional development for faculty, staff, and students when possible. My passion for public higher education has been a driving force for over 30 years, and an understanding of the PA state system's challenges and opportunities will surely follow if given this opportunity.

I am sharing my curriculum vitae here, and I hope to hear from you regarding this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Darrell Newton, Ph.D.