

Janet Simon Schreck

March 1, 2024

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I enthusiastically submit this letter of application for the position of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Shippensburg University. I have outlined background information about my professional experiences and dispositions below, and I have attached a copy of my curriculum vitae (CV) for your consideration.

Over the past 30 years, I have been privileged to travel three successful career paths—the first as an allied health practitioner, the second as a faculty member, and the third as a higher education administrator and leader. My formative experiences as a student, faculty member, and administrator at a liberal arts institution instilled in me the principle of *cura personalis* or care for the whole person, the necessity of multiple perspectives in addressing complex problems, and the mission-critical value of focusing on quality instruction and student development.

Those values were the foundation for my role at Johns Hopkins University where I currently serve as Senior Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. There, I have spent the past eight years improving the educational experience for undergraduate and graduate students by catalyzing and empowering collective action among various groups of faculty, administrators, and students. I am eager to advance to a provost position in a community-centered university whose mission focuses on providing high quality education and support for student success to a diverse student body. I believe that the knowledge, skills, and abilities I have gained throughout my career have prepared me to lead the faculty and academic enterprise at Shippensburg University.

Below, I provide a more detailed explanation of my experience and strengths as a collaborative, systems-focused academic leader.

### **Forging Partnerships and Building Bridges**

Throughout each of my career paths, I have consistently sought to build connections across all levels, whether it be across individuals, departments, disciplines, organizations, or institutions. As a speech-language pathologist, I realized that an interdisciplinary approach—focusing on the patient as a key member of the team—resulted in improved patient outcomes. This enabled me to establish the first interdisciplinary stroke rehabilitation team at Good Samaritan Hospital decades ago.

My passion for interdisciplinarity was further manifested in my role as Executive Director for the Loyola Clinical Centers (LCC). I collaborated with five graduate programs and numerous administrative departments to provide state-of-the-art interprofessional training to aspiring clinicians and teachers while delivering accessible, affordable clinical and educational services to underserved populations in the Baltimore/DC region. When I assumed my role as leader of the LCC, I stepped into a dysfunctional unit in which four academic departments had been unwillingly thrust together in a top-down decision. By establishing trust and equity, building effective communication, and creating a shared vision, I helped the LCC evolve into a thriving organization that Loyola recognized as an exemplar of the “Jesuit mission in action” and highlighted as a

principle target for fundraising in its 2013-2018 *Bright Minds, Bold Hearts* comprehensive campaign. During that campaign, I successfully raised more than \$1,000,000 in corporate, foundation, and private gifts/grants to the LCC.

My record of building relationships and breaking down silos led to my appointment as Johns Hopkins University's inaugural Assistant Vice Provost for Education in 2015. Johns Hopkins is highly decentralized with nine schools that represent vastly different disciplines and cultures. While its Responsibility Center Management budget model and high level of school autonomy foster nimbleness and innovation, the lack of connection and communication between academic affairs leaders was striking when I arrived. Each school had its own set of academic policies (or lack thereof) with variations that negatively impacted the student experience.

To build connections and bridges between schools, the Vice Provost for Education and I began convening the Vice Deans for Education from each school on a monthly basis. Over the past six years, I have successfully transitioned the group from a collection of individuals representing the unique interests of their schools to a team of leaders who routinely share best practices and innovations, seek each other's counsel, and collaborate to establish consistent policies to improve the educational experience for all Hopkins students.

As a member of the COVID Core Team and Steering Committee, I relied on the relationships I had built with academic and student affairs leaders across the schools to plan and implement countless plans and pivots that promoted continuity of instruction for our undergraduate and graduate students. Together with the Vice Provost for Student Affairs, I co-chaired a university-wide Pandemic Student Advisory Committee for the duration of the pandemic response. The committee, comprising 20 students from across all nine schools, ensured that student voices and perspectives informed the phased resumption of in-person educational, clinical, and research. The formation of a university-wide student committee at Hopkins was unprecedented, and the impact of convening this diversity of student perspectives cannot be overstated. As a direct result of this effort, the [Second JHU Roadmap on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) recommended the establishment of what is now a standing Cross-Institutional Student Advisory Committee, a committee I co-facilitate.

### **Creating Shared Vision and Establishing Strategies for Success**

When people are connected and trust is established, they become open to creating shared visions and pathways for of success. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to engage LCC faculty, students and staff in the creation and implementation of two strategic plans during my tenure. Key to their success was identification of measurable outcomes and jointly-owned attainment strategies, which we developed using a bottom-up approach to promote broad stakeholder support. We used formative assessments to identify barriers and create a system of checks to ensure accountability and document progress. The LCC's approach was viewed as an exemplar for strategic planning across Loyola's schools and departments.

More recently, I spent nearly three years engaged with the deans of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences (KSAS) and Whiting School of Engineering (WSE) along with 30 faculty, students, administrators and alumni in re-envisioning the Johns Hopkins University undergraduate education experience through the [Second Commission on Undergraduate Education \(CUE2\)](#). In its 88-page report, for which I served as primary author, CUE2 outlined both aspirational and concrete recommendations designed to "paint the corners and edges" while allowing for faculty

innovation to color in the remaining space. It recommended adopting six foundational abilities all undergraduates should achieve over a four-year arc of instruction; developing a required first year seminar, streamlining major requirements to allow greater intellectual exploration, and creating an optional semester of intensive study or experiential learning during junior or senior year.

Since the Board of Trustees enthusiastically endorsed the CUE2 report and recommendations in Fall 2020, I have co-lead a number of its initiatives, which have permanently changed the Hopkins undergraduate education experience. They include implementing the required First Year Seminar for Arts and Sciences and Engineering students; reducing course requirements in most undergraduate majors; expanding and redesigning undergraduate academic advising; identifying and implementing a new general education model; and identifying best practices for comprehensive and transparent teaching assessment.

Most recently, I began serving as member of the Student Success Blueprint Steering Committee, a group charged with developing a strategic series of recommendations to promote success of Hopkins undergraduate students. Since receiving the 2018 historic \$1.8 billion gift from Michael R. Bloomberg that helped the university move to a permanent need-blind, no-loan admissions policy, Johns Hopkins is now one of the most diverse universities among its peers socioeconomically, racially, and ethnically. Rapid diversification of the undergraduate student body paired with challenges from the COVID pandemic have resulted in the need for careful assessment and strategic intervention to ensure that all students are successful academically, personally, and socially. As part of this effort, I am leading a working group charged with developing recommendations to support student success in gateway science/STEM courses, an area where we have seen a recent spike in “D, F, W” rates across all students and disproportionate increases among first generation, limited income students and students from underrepresented groups. The working group is engaging with faculty to examine data, determine hypotheses, and engage in targeted interventions. We have noted early success with the required use of active learning strategies in gateway computing courses as well as improvements in biology and chemistry performance through a summer bridge program and utilization of required peer-lead tutoring during the semester.

Since July 2022, I have engaged a university-wide group in exploring the future of non-degree, non-credit opportunities (NDNC) at Hopkins. With a vision to provide lifelong learning opportunities in response to employer and learner needs, the group spent four months exploring school- and university-level strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and challenges. Its plan and recommendations—including the adoption of a single learning management system for NDNC across the university; procurement of a shared CRM and catalog for university NDNC offerings; interdivisional business-to-business marketing strategies; a streamlined contract review process; and stackable credential pilot programs—were recently endorsed by university leadership. I am now stewarding implementation of the plan.

### **Promoting Continuous Quality Improvement and Innovation**

My portfolio at Hopkins includes two areas that are often pitted against each other in higher education: academic compliance/accreditation and educational innovation. In my experience, it is not difficult and perhaps even beneficial to marry the two. Critical self-evaluation and assessment leads to improvement in quality and can often serve as a spark for innovation.

For example, I collaborated with the Doctor of Philosophy Board, which advises the provost on PhD education across the university, to develop a PhD program review process that provides a unique institutional view of the strengths, challenges, and opportunities our PhD students and programs experience. This highlighted the need for more intentional and consistent professional development and career mentoring for PhD students. As a result, PhD programs are now required to incorporate annual Individual Development Plans. In addition, the university's Experiential Learning and Life Design team now offers innovative professional development and career planning programs for PhD students.

I also oversee learning and institutional assessment and chair the University Council on Learning Assessment. After I reconstituted the group to include faculty and staff assessment champions from all nine schools, the council decided that a university-wide assessment management system would address collective challenges while affording us the opportunity for innovation in learning assessment. As part of the university's [Students Services Excellence Initiative](#), I led efforts to procure that platform (Heliocampus Assessment), unifying the heterogenic group in articulating an innovative vision for the Johns Hopkins University Comprehensive Learner Record, a robust and portable digital representation of students' learning achievements across curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular, and NDNC educational experiences.

As interim chair for the Advanced Specialties in Education department in the School of Education, I have integrated the use of Heliocampus Assessment in the newly redesigned Ed.D. program. Learning assessment data mapped to program outcomes is collected in Heliocampus for key performance indicators across the student's course sequence. Both faculty and students are now provided reports of student progress at the program outcome level regularly. Faculty use this data to facilitate discussions with students about their knowledge, skills and abilities, shifting the focus away from grades to learning and encouraging metacognitive reflection. The assessment data also helps to identify at-risk students for intervention and to encourage continuous quality improvement of courses and instruction as faculty reflect on outcomes at the student, course, and program level. While adoption of the new system by faculty has been challenging, even reluctant faculty recently voiced the benefit of using the assessment data to ground faculty self-reflection and self-evaluation about their instructional and pedagogical approaches.

In conclusion, I am excited by the prospect of returning to a community-focused university that focuses on providing a high-quality learning experience to a diverse group of students and by the opportunity to apply my experience forging partnerships and building bridges, creating shared vision and establishing strategies for success, and promoting continuous quality improvement. Like nearly all other higher education institutions, Shippensburg faces unprecedented challenges that require an academic leader who can focus on the larger system to build a shared understanding of complex problems, foster reflection and generative conversations to cultivate collective creativity, and shift the collective focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future. Transitions in leadership can bring great optimism and opportunity but change is also stressful and challenging. As a new provost, I will pay careful attention to that transition and spend considerable time listening to, learning from, and building relationships with the faculty so as to collaboratively develop a vision for the Shippensburg faculty and academic enterprise that honors traditions and successes while also embracing new ideas and opportunities.

I would welcome the opportunity to partner with President Patterson, the Executive Management Team, faculty, staff, students, and neighboring community members in serving Shippensburg as its next provost and steering the institution through the next phase of its growth and development as Pennsylvania's premier public university.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet Simon Schreck".

Janet Simon Schreck, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, FNAP