**January 29, 2024**

Shippensburg University

**Job Title: Vice Provost for Enrollment Management**

Dear Search Committee Members:

I am writing to express my interest in the **Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing** position at your university. I see this as an unusually attractive opportunity and am submitting my resume for your review and consideration.

Currently, I serve as Founder and Principal Consultant at SEM Consulting. However, most recently I served as Senior Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM), a public four-year Carnegie R1 institution enrolling nearly 14,000 undergraduate and graduate students. In this highly visible role on campus and a budget of over $8M, I provided leadership to 80 staff in the Division of Enrollment Management including Directors/Dean in the following departments: Undergraduate Admissions, Financial Aid, Registrar, Undergraduate Scholarships, Online Learning and Enrollment, USM Coastal Enrollment, dotted line leadership to Graduate Admissions, dotted line leadership to International Admissions, and a PeopleSoft Administrator.

Please find below narrative which includes my perspective and vision related to congruency between my experiences and the individual you seek along with selected achievements at The University of Southern Mississippi.

## *Perspective and Vision*
**Experience in developing and implementing data informed strategic enrollment plans that reflect best practices and proven expertise in evaluating and improving admission strategies, utilizing data, metrics, and reporting to make informed decisions.**

In leadership roles at various universities across the nation, I have undertaken the responsibility of creating data-driven and strategically informed strategic enrollment management (SEM) plans that encourage collaboration across the campus. With experience at diverse higher education institutions, my roles at each school have involved executing a comprehensive vision for strategic enrollment management at the campus level. As such, I have taken a leading role in building institutional support by engaging in collaboration through complete transparency.

As such, I have the responsibility of crafting specialized, **data-driven/data informed strategic enrollment plans** that not only consider the student experience but also harness the skills and abilities of our staff. This effort takes the following components to be successful including: clearly articulating the "vision" associated with the plan, "synching" the SEM plan with the institutional mission and strategic plan, setting enrollment goals and KPI's consistent with institutional goals, building dynamic brand (or augmenting brand) messaging and establishing communication plans.

At USM, I was laser focused on connecting SEM planning and **developing comprehensive strategies to address crucial enrollment imperatives**. Throughout my career, I have immersed myself in quantitative data analytics by interpreting and acting upon statistical results. This experience has laid a foundation that is profoundly data-centric and data-informed, allowing me to apply this knowledge and insights to the work we do.

My work with statistics has also frequently involved **predictive modeling**. Together, with highly skilled Institutional Research (IR) teams at USM (and at other institutions), I worked to develop statistical models to better identify variables which directly influence enrollment behavior and segment prospective student populations at all levels of the admissions funnel. By examining past longitudinal data through regression or probit models, these outcomes are then translated into predictive model scores which illuminate the propensity of student matriculation through the assignment of a "likelihood score" to enrollment. These "scores" can then predict with high confidence a student's likelihood to convert from applicant to accept and accept to enroll.

In the realm of data analytics, I have also been involved in crafting **predictive yield models and forecast models** for enrollment. These endeavors have involved refining our enrollment strategies, spanning from applicant targeting to conversion within the admissions process, all aimed at enhancing matriculation and retention rates. This comprehensive effort encompasses messaging and marketing activities at various stages, including pre-admission, applicant engagement, and post-admission phases. To achieve this, we employed a diverse range of communication channels, such as email, social media, CRM, personalized outreach, video content, and the application of generative artificial intelligence.

## Experience with mentoring and motivating team members.

I am dedicated to creating innovative, out-of-the-box thinking and effective problem-solving approaches, with the ability to discern and clearly articulate an optimal path forward in seeking enrollment growth in a competitive landscape. My focus includes fostering an environment of trust, support, and partnership that empowers the team. I strongly advocate for customer service, student support, and a collaborative, optimistic approach. Further, I actively promote open communication, accountability in decision-making, and information sharing, while identifying opportunities to enhance processes. Advocating for the unit's needs, I am committed to consistently mentoring, developing, and nurturing the team. My goal is to establish an

imaginative, forward-thinking, results-driven ethos within the division. Finally, my track record demonstrates a steadfast commitment to training, developing, and retaining staff.

**The ability to work collaboratively with the Division of Academic Affairs, associated colleges and departments to ensure marketing and recruitment functions encompass the University's unique programs at an individual level.**

A critical aspect of a successful enrollment management strategy hinges on establishing meaningful connections with internal stakeholders. The realization of any effective SEM plan most certainly requires a collective effort. If entrusted with this role, I am fully dedicated to initiating active engagement within enrollment management and campus constituencies including academic and student affairs, deans, and athletic leaders from the very beginning. I aim to solicit their viewpoints and insights concerning enrollment trends. I eagerly look forward to partnering with constituents to support the institutional strategic plan and build upon existing SEM planning. This collaborative approach will undoubtedly foster a more comprehensive and successful SEM strategy and yield benefits for Shippensburg University.

**Demonstrated commitment to advancing and supporting diversity initiatives.**

Throughout my career in Enrollment Management, I have consistently demonstrated a steadfast commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the recruitment process, along with a proven track record of actively seeking and serving a diverse student body. For example, during my tenure as Executive Vice Provost at UCM, I played a particularly prominent role in advancing DEI initiatives, both within my division and across the entire campus. In this capacity, I assumed responsibility for the comprehensive oversight of all Title III programs. UCM's grant for $1.62M served to increase student success, retention, and completion by front-loading academic and social support for first-year and at-risk students through summer bridge programs, wrap-around programming, and targeted academic advising (onboarding and first-year programs)

In addition, I established an Enrollment Management Diversity Advisement Recruitment committee with the primary objective of exploring strategies to attract and retain a greater number of diverse students, matching the retention rates of non-diverse students more effectively. This approach resulted in a notable increase of 0.5% in underrepresented student populations. While this percentage might appear modest, it translated to an approximate increase of 90 students, a significant achievement, especially considering the context of rural Missouri.

## Achievements at The University of Southern Mississippi

**Significant Enrollment Increases at The University of Southern Mississippi**
Enrollment had been static or declining for many years at The University of Southern Mississippi and I was hired to reinvigorate enrollment and recruitment operations. This past year my team and I implemented numerous innovative initiatives designed to make an immediate impact and

stabilize enrollment at the institution. My experience includes partnering with our staff to enhance and refine marketing and communication strategies and encompassing various channels such as print, CRM, social media, and video. As a result of these exhaustive efforts, first-year and transfer new student enrollment for Fall 2023 was up +8.05% (+232 students). Specifically, new first-year student enrollment surged by +9.93% (+159 students), while new transfer student enrollment marked a 5.53% rise, translating to +73 new students. Notably, both undergraduate and graduate international enrollments reached record highs, including a 157% increase (+74 new students) in first-year international student enrollment. The momentum extended to online new student enrollment, which exhibited a strong 6.2% uptick (130+ students) year over year.

Having reviewed the position qualifications, I believe my broad knowledge and understanding of strategic enrollment management, along with a commitment to the core values and mission of a university such as yours could make me a great fit for your institution! I look forward to learning more about your school and am excited to join the team as your next **Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing**!

Sincerely,
Randall Langston, Ph.D.