

17 March 2024

Dear Search Committee:

I am writing to express my sincere interest in the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing position at Shippensburg University. Providing leadership for aspiration, ambition, collaboration, execution and results in the recruitment, enrollment, retention and graduation of students is my province. As a life-long pupil of higher education there are few institutions where the often elusive but transformational synergy of institution and community persists: a place where creativity and imagination are cultivated, where the full measure of the institution can be leveraged in extremely progressive fashions and where the interfaces of teaching and service are readily available for capitalization among incredibly rich populations. As an individual seeking inspirational environs it is with great enthusiasm that I seek opportunity where service commands an aspirational vision for excellence and engagement, a penchant for creativity and innovation, resolution in honor and integrity, and where the scope and potential is boundless.

When I attended college, I was a first generation student attempting to find my way at the academy and as grounding chose to study and incorporate Appalachia in my intellectual pursuits as frequently as possible. Discovery of the synergies of passion and intellectual inquiry compelled my return to Appalachia following graduation to work with Project Discovery in an endeavor to inspire Southwest Virginia high school students to consider post-secondary education. My obsession with the promise imbued in the academy found genesis in my home region and later flourished in service to the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tennessee. When I transitioned to the College of Business Administration I had the opportunity to create intentional learning environments that fostered the virtues and properties emblematic of the liberal tradition to great effect. Understanding inspiration and incentivization of students' decision making and prioritization resulted in more intentionality, less randomness, and the creation of more predictable returns and synthesis of transformational outcomes for diverse populations. Designing those experiences solidified my calling as a chief enrollment officer at a purposeful institution. My ambition to serve in this capacity inspired me to pursue enrollment management posts at the residential campuses of the University of Mary Washington (Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges member), the University of Wisconsin La Crosse, and Lake Superior State University to build on 10 years of college based admissions and comprehensive student support experience in the advancement of expertise in recruitment, admissions, and aid packaging. These opportunities developed a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the academy in many variations, geographic and cultural contexts, its nuances, and the motivations that are intrinsic in its organizations. It fostered an appreciation for affinity and alignment and bolstered my knowledge in creating and leveraging comparative and competitive advantages.

Shippensburg is a very unique and progressive institution and unequivocally positioned to inspire diverse educational experiences and offers the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing opportunities to develop and shape the community by demonstrating purposeful engaged leadership across multiple units; with numerous support and auxiliary services, staff, faculty, administrators, and community leaders; and through continuous program evaluation and process improvement - all endeavors which I find motivational and exciting.

As indicated in the attached curriculum vitae, my credentials include:

- dedication to institutional visions, missions, and strategic plans as demonstrated through all aspects of my management of Lake Superior State University's Division of Enrollment Services, the University of Wisconsin La Crosse's division of Enrollment Management and International

Education & Engagement, the University of Mary Washington's Division of Enrollment Management and Student Services, ten years of perpetual improvement and development of academic support services for all College of Business Administration students at The University of Tennessee, and two years of academic advising administrative experience in the College of Arts and Sciences Advising Services;

Enrollment Management Outcomes:

Lake Superior State University

- Produced 15.6% increase in new freshman enrollment from 2019 -2021
- Re-envisioned all recruitment materials & communication plans in Ellucian CRM Recruit
- Restructured institutional aid strategy & launched direct admissions
- Increased total enrollment in 2023 – first fall to fall increase since 2018

University of Wisconsin La Crosse

- Created largest class in 30 years
- Secured the most diverse class in the history of the institution
- Increased the four year graduation rate by 6%
- Produced a 8.5% increase in degree production
- Redefined Territory Management and Prioritized Pell-Eligible Processing
- Created Brand Management Strategy
- Arrested declines in international activity and engagement

University of Mary Washington

- Introduced Territory Management
- Redefined Application Processing to Prioritize Pell-Eligible Communication Strategies
- Created Brand Management Strategy
- Reinvented Academic and Career Services

University of Tennessee – College of Business Administration

- Simplified the application process to increase yield and minimize academic redirection
- Grew enrollment from 3,400 to 5,200 students
- Increased college retention from 74% to 90%
- Increased the 6 year graduation rate from 68% to 86%

- extensive experience with students' academic, professional, and personal development via design and delivery of programming, advising, career counseling, tutoring, academic support, and mentorship;
- extensive knowledge of leveraging Student Information Systems and Academic Support Platforms (e.g. Banner-Ellucian, Ellucian CRM Recruit, PeopleSoft, Legacy SIS's, Starfish, Ad Astra, Symplicity, Handshake, and Salesforce);
- proven ability to develop institutional goals; and
- substantial experience in the identification of target opportunities for recruitment, marketing, admission, and perpetual support of diverse students across the arc of the educational experience.

I have demonstrated repeated success in improving multiple programs and student services in various academic settings. During this evolution, I have sought continuous process evaluation and have pursued, implemented, and executed aspirational, responsible, and necessary changes through faculty, student, and administrative inclusion to further facilitate the goals of the university and colleges. Pursuit of excellence and the design, evaluation, and implementation of holistic student services are hallmarks of my drive, ambition, and inspiration.

From my matriculation as a first generation, pell-eligible, and non-traditional student to my initial professional experience with economically challenged high school students in Southwest Virginia and through my entire career there has been an overarching principle in my professional development. It is a privilege to work in a profession of empowerment and within entities that are transformational agents of social and economic change. This opportunity represents the culmination of years of drive and ambition. The opportunity to serve as the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Marketing leverages my strengths in academic management, foundation in liberal learning and professional education, and desire to serve students, faculty, and staff across the spectrum of academic and student experiences. It is a responsibility of distinction and commands unwavering commitment as it represents a unique opportunity to contribute in a very meaningful way to Shippensburg University, Pennsylvania, the region, the nation, and the community at large. It is a responsibility that is both humbling and extraordinarily motivational.

Attached to my curriculum vitae please find a list of references which encompass former supervisors and colleagues. I look forward to discussing my qualifications and desire to meet the challenges and opportunities this position presents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Alfred Pierce III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Fred Alfred Pierce III

Attachments (2)

Attachment 1

An issue pertaining to my professional experience needs contextualization prior to your committee encountering incomplete information. When I assumed the role Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management at the University of Wisconsin La Crosse as a direct report to a new Provost it was for the opportunity at a more comprehensive portfolio that included international education. One of the unstipulated challenges was that the Office of International Education had posted substantial financial deficits in four of the five years prior to my arrival, while reporting directly to the Chancellor. Additionally, there had been a sampling audit performed by Wisconsin System prior to my arrival that indicated potential concerns in practice of student insurance and admissions. The Provost charged me with developing clarity in the understanding of why and how this emerged. During the first year we revealed financial practices and procedures that were more than just unusual. Evidence suggested irregularities in procurement and practice of travel, billing and collections, student health insurance, and the management of study abroad and exchange fees that were inconsistent with University of Wisconsin System policies. Findings indicated that many of these were potentially illegal and had placed the institution at considerable risk. While incongruent many of the practices had somehow become institutionalized. At the direction of the Provost I presented sanitized findings to faculty and staff governance groups which resulted in institutional expectations that organizational changes were mandatory. While the Chancellor was initially present at these governance meetings in all cases he elected to leave prior to the presentation and discussion of findings.

In collaboration with the Provost we developed and initiated a plan which included the reassignment of certain staff, and allegations of discrimination and nepotism emerged from employees formerly responsible for the situation at hand. They leveraged every means at their disposal, including local media, in an attempt to impugn the solution and divert attention away from the relevant issues that necessitated change. Wisconsin System Counsel advised the Provost and me not to dignify these very public and personal attacks. Unfortunately, not all parties embraced counsel's guidance and yet their continued recommendation for us was to ignore these claims and dedicate our efforts to risk mitigation and protection of the institution. At no point did I have any interaction with Human Resources nor the Chancellor concerning any of the allegations, demonstrating System Counsel's perception of their significance. Nevertheless, there are multiple commentaries and inferences in the local press that are intentionally misleading. Given Wisconsin Statute § 19.85 (1) (f) states that the information below should not be discussed in open meetings:

"Considering information which, if discussed in public, would likely have a substantially adverse effect on the reputations of the persons named. Examples include financial, medical, social or personal histories; disciplinary data of specific persons; preliminary review of specific personnel problems; or investigations of charges against specific persons."

and guidance from the University of Wisconsin System regarding the following information not being released in open records requests:

"Certain information used by the employer for purposes of staff management planning, such as performance evaluations, judgments, recommendations concerning future salary adjustments or other wage treatments, management bonus plans, promotions, job assignments, letters of reference, or other comments or ratings of employees."

I felt heeding Wisconsin System Counsel's guidance focusing on the work and continuing to protect staff and faculty from retaliation was my duty, regardless the actions of other institutional representatives.

These findings necessitated an internal audit of international education. The initial charge included all financial activity including travel, billing, recruitment, faculty programming, and insurance. Shortly after launch, the audit scope was narrowed to limit examination specifically to faculty led programming. The campus based internal auditor outlined 12 separate findings from the examination of two years of faculty programming. Upon review the Wisconsin Board of Regents in 2015 demanded international education be audited system-wide with more dedicated and purposeful attention in its practice; and moreover, altered the reporting line of campus internal auditors from campus to system level. Following the Provost's departure, and reporting of audit findings to the Board of Regents, the enrollment management position was eliminated allegedly for budgetary reasons; and it was allegedly at the request of the Chancellor that I was charged to serve in a limited duration capacity as Director in the Office of International Education (now International Education & Engagement) with the goal of comprehensively re-architecting the program. The references to my employment published in the *La Crosse Tribune* almost all contain inaccuracies or advance unsubstantiated suppositions. My University of Wisconsin La Crosse and Wisconsin System personnel files address my tenure in the following manner:

Fred Pierce served in the roles of Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management and Director of International Education at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse from August, 2013, to August, 2016. Mr. Pierce's wife, Kim Pierce, was hired by the University through a spousal hiring policy. During his tenure he was charged with addressing a complicated financial situation in regard to the delivery of international education that resulted in an internal audit and organizational change. The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's Director of Affirmative Action investigated allegations of discrimination by Mr. Pierce and concluded that Mr. Pierce did not violate the anti-discrimination policies in place at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Mr. Pierce executed his duties in a manner consistent with expectations.

I have always been a dedicated administrator. We have ethical and financial responsibilities to the stakeholders that empower us to leverage our professional energies in the investment of our students, our colleagues, and for the betterment of our communities and while we are grounded in these responsibilities we must demonstrate courage and commitment to the advancement and evolution of institutional goals. Despite the distractions created by the situation under my leadership Enrollment Management delivered the largest class in 30 years, the most diverse class in the history of the institution, and realized a 6% increase in the four year graduation rate and an 8.5% increase in degree production. I transitioned to the Director of Corporate Partnerships and Career Services for the Tippie College of Business at the University of Iowa as a longtime colleague asking me to spearhead a project developing a comprehensive strategy for a purposeful approach to external engagement and career development and while interesting in its complexities and expanding my knowledge to another aspect of the academy it was simply not as compelling nor as inspirational as work in enrollment management. My commitment to integrity and responsibility are absolute and I thought a more thorough understanding of the circumstances instructive in the committee's consideration.