

October 30, 2014

Marc D. Miller, Ph.D.
Dean, The Hull College of Business
Georgia Regents University
2500 Walton Way
Augusta, GA 30904-2200

Marian Frenche, Principal and Practice Leader
Greenwood/Asher & Associates, Inc.
42 Business Centre Drive, Suite 206
Miramar Beach, Florida 32550

Dear Ms. Frenche:

It was a pleasure to have spoken to you last week regarding the position of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Lamar University. I am honored to have been nominated for this position and enthusiastically enter into the search process.

Currently, I am dean of the James M. Hull College of Business at Georgia Regents University (GRU). Georgia Regents was recently formed with the consolidation of Augusta State University (ASU) and Georgia Health Sciences University (GHSU). ASU was a state university with approximately 7,000 students and 4 colleges. GHSU was the state's medical university with enrollment of approximately 4,000. The new university has a vision and mission that is consistent with that of Lamar University relative to research, teaching, and service. We are a research university that includes nine colleges and schools with nearly 9,000 students, over 1,000 full-time faculty and nearly 7,000 staff. The university has a budget of approximately 600 million on the university campus (700 million on the medical center campus). We have an endowment of 129 million and sponsored activity of approximately 98 million.

I have an inclusive leadership style, am skilled at strategic management, and excel at community building. These qualities are indicative of the attributes that you express in the position description and are indicators of my ability to be successful as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Lamar University.

Leadership Style

You have indicated that one of the key qualities of your next provost is to provide strategic leadership that is characterized by a "commitment to shared governance." My management style and experiences are consistent with this expectation. I believe that I have a track record of creating a climate of enthusiasm, broad based support, and high energy.

I have built a solid administrative team in the Hull College with both long time staff and new hires with clearly defined roles. I consider myself a servant leader and empower people to make decisions. I believe in my team and know that they become the best that they can be when I am supportive, caring, and place their needs over my own.

My style for budgetary decisions is to help craft a strategic plan that is fully understood throughout the university and is able to show the relationship to budgetary decisions to the strategic plan. The individuals responsible for various aspects of the plan are given the ability and accountability to make fiscal decisions. My responsibility as a Provost is to lead the conceptualization of the plan, to help procure resources for its execution, and to lead and monitor the implementation of the plan.

I have had experience leading a large business school with these principles. In addition, I have been a member of the president's cabinet for the entirety of my career as dean and have been an active participant in the development and execution of the university budget. I have always taken a holistic point of view to the budget and strategic priorities. For example, I advocated for and raised private dollars in order to increase capacity for nuclear science degree programs in the Chemistry and Physics department.

I was also a key player and chair of the search committee to recruit the Chief Financial Officer of ASU and was offered the position as an interim. However, I believed that the pressing needs in the Hull College related to accreditation status would be compromised if I had left at that juncture. Currently, I am leading the task force to realign the university summer budget process to be based on responsibility budgeting principles.

I believe strongly in the concept of shared governance within the academy. Faculty governance is the way for institutions to ensure that all constituents have a part in the planning and operation of the organization. Thus, it creates a shared commitment to the future of the university. In my career, I have been chair of the Augusta State University (ASU) Faculty Policies Committee (which is generally analogous to a faculty senate), been supportive of the local AAUP chapter, and have created faculty and student advisory panels to vet ideas for policy-making and implementation.

I am quite confident that my experiences and leadership style can be translated to the position of Provost and VPAA at Lamar University.

Strategic Management

One of my key strengths is in the area of strategic planning and implementation. I have led the transformation of the Hull College of Business with the ultimate aim of redefining our mission relative to both peer and aspirant institutions. We have defined very specific and measurable outcomes to determine our success. I believe that clear and measurable goals are paramount in the achievement of an institution's vision and purpose.

For example, we defined a key part of the strategic plan to encourage our students and faculty to have global awareness. This was translated into a measurable goal of increasing our study abroad participation by 10% each year for five years. In order to meet this goal, we have raised endowment resources to award scholarships for our students to defray the cost of overseas study and redirected resources to create a position which markets these programs to our students.

In addition, my experiences in helping to lead the consolidation of two large universities with different missions and cultures have given me the insight into the importance of wide spread communication and inclusive decision making. During the consolidation, I played a key role in developing and executing the strategic plans that defined our new university. I helped craft the vision, mission, and key objectives in my role as a member of the President's cabinet, the Provost cabinet, and the University Strategic Planning committee.

Thus, I have led the development of our college strategic plan, played a major role in the development of our university plan, and am currently heavily involved in the next phase of our overall university strategic planning process. I am confident that I can bring the same level of energy, vision, and creative thinking to the strategic planning process at Lamar University.

Enrollment management has been at the top of my agenda as the dean of the Hull College since day one. I am passionate about recruitment, retention, and progression toward graduation. We have recently completed the implementation of the Career and Academic Planning (CAP) Center which provides programming centered on the concept of a one-stop shop for all advising needs of our students. The CAP Center has career advising services, academic advising services, professional student services (e.g. time management workshops) and student counseling in one area under the direction of the Hull College.

We have created systems which measure and report metrics on retention and progression and we are beginning to see the results of these efforts pay off. I am passionate about this aspect of the management of the academic enterprise. If we cannot recruit and graduate students more effectively, then the academy as defined by institutions such as Lamar University cannot survive in the long term. Further, we have a responsibility to our students to provide an environment where the probability of successful completion of a college degree is the highest it can be.

I believe my leadership and strategic planning skill sets are consistent with your needs for aspirational leadership to help guide Lamar to new levels of success and impact.

Community Building

During my nine years as dean in the Hull College we have raised nearly six million dollars for scholarships, distinguished lecture series, named professorships, and the naming of the Hull College and the Knox School of Accountancy. In addition, the amount of annual giving to the Hull College has risen each year since I assumed the role of dean. I was chair of the annual campaign this year and we exceeded our goals and raised nearly 1 million dollars this year.

I have a strong track record of civic engagement, economic development, and community involvement. I am a member of the Rotary Club of Augusta (Paul Harris Fellow), the Augusta Exchange Club, and either serve or have served on the boards of The Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Augusta, The Salvation Army, Junior Achievement, and The Savannah River Site --Community Reuse Organization (SRS-CRO).

I have participated in several Economic Development projects that have had the impact of bringing several companies to Augusta and the creation of hundreds of jobs. In addition, through the SRS-CRO, I

was an active participant on a work force study which has shown that nearly 10,000 new engineering and technical jobs relating to the nuclear power industry will be brought to the Augusta area over the next 10 years. This study provided the catalyst for the Nuclear Workforce Initiative (NWI) (<http://www.srscro.org/nuclear-workforce-initiative/>). I am proud of the work of the NWI in bringing math and science education and training to our region.

Further, as chair of the SRS-CRO, I interfaced directly with the Department of Energy (DOE) at both the regional and national level for economic development opportunities. I regularly traveled to Washington DC to meet with congressional and DOE representatives in regard to the future and current operation of the Savannah River Site (a DOE nuclear defense facility). Within this organization, I delivered a one million dollar grant to assist our Chemistry and Physics department to enhance their ability to offer a new program in Nuclear Science.

Currently, I am member of the Augusta Area Chamber of Commerce board and the chairman of the Business-Education Advisory Committee. This committee is tasked with assisting the local school board with increasing the STEM education offerings and to provide corporate support for these initiatives.

I believe that the university is an essential ingredient for economic development of a community. In addition, successful communities are vital to the growth and development of a university. I further believe that I have the experience and skills that Lamar University desires in order to develop public/private partnerships, improve town and gown relationships, and to be an outstanding communicator to advance the image of the university.

Summary

I am a “second generation” college student. Both of my grandfathers worked in the petro-chemical industry in Beaumont. Neither of them attended college and both came from poor backgrounds. Had they not instilled in my father and mother an understanding of the transformative power of education, I would probably be a part of a community with limited opportunity for economic advancement. Because of the sacrifices that my family made before me, I believe that I have an obligation to “pay it forward.” Therefore, higher education is my vocation, my profession and my passion.

The opportunity to become the next provost of Lamar University is appealing to me on a very personal level. I was born in Beaumont. My father is a graduate of Lamar University (1959) as are many of my first and second cousins. I still have many family members who live in Beaumont. My grandmother’s home backed up to the campus of Lamar and as a child I rode my bike around the campus. When we adopted my daughter, the final court proceedings were conducted in the Jefferson County courthouse. Hence, even though I have not lived in the “golden triangle” since I was a child, I do understand the community and know it to be a great place to live.

I have been happily married to my wife (Linda) for 25 years. We met in the theater where I was doing a play in high school and she was working backstage. We carry our love of the arts and humanities forward as I know that without it, we might not have met. I am devoted to my family and am proud of my children: Alec (23) and Nancy (10). I love college football! I am an avid golfer and even used to be a part time caddy at the Augusta National Golf Club.

If you compare my experiences and successes with the attributes that you desire in your next Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, I believe that you will see that I have the skill sets necessary to successfully lead Lamar University. I have experience as a senior administrator at my university. I have the financial, political, people, and strategic planning skills required of a Vice President of a multi-million dollar organization. I believe that the university is a major engine for economic development and growth; hence we must be an active part of the community. I am driven to find situations where everyone wins. I am passionate about transformative power of the academy.

I look forward to the opportunity to talk with you more about this position. I am truly excited about the prospects and I wish you all the best in your search.

Best Regards

Marc D. Miller, Ph.D.