May 22, 2020

Kelly Haag
Chief Student Affairs Officer
Division of Student Affairs
c/o Yvette Alicea-Reed
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Members of the Search Committee:

Please accept this letter as my formal application for the position of Executive Director of Student Life & Services in the Division of Student Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). My personal commitment to higher education and experience make me the ideal candidate for this opportunity. My enclosed curriculum vitae and references will demonstrate my passion for positively impacting students’ lives.

After having established a 20 year career in student affairs, I chose to move to full-time consulting, only to discover that I truly missed being a part of a campus community, working as part of a team on a common mission, and maintaining meaningful relationships with colleagues and students. I am interested in returning to a role where I will be directly involved in supporting individual student achievement and creating a vibrant, inclusive community. In my research of UWM, I have concluded that my beliefs as an educator align closely with your philosophy of student development.

The foundation of excellent student services is strong inter-personal relationships and problem solving. Long-term, substantial progress results from goal-oriented decision making by a partnership of faculty, staff, students, and other community members. This partnership of collegiality and collaboration is created through proactive communication about each stakeholder’s needs/desires, the development of shared goals, the full utilization of articulated assessment results, and the sophisticated management of available resources.

In partnerships with individual faculty and staff from academic affairs, student success, and enrollment management; I have spearheaded student affairs efforts to develop more holistic learning environments in which academic learning and co-curricular experiences drive personal growth and professional development.

In my previous positions, I have led and supported a diverse range of services and projects, including residential education, facility management, student engagement,
behavioral/crisis response, human resources, budgeting, strategic planning, programmatic assessment, institutional policy development, event management, IT infrastructure upgrades, design of software-based online services, and the launch of smartphone social media apps.

Assets that I would bring to the role are a broad knowledge of both higher education generally, as well as the characteristics and needs of a comprehensive student affairs operation. My experiences cover public and private campuses with student populations ranging in size from 1,200 to 26,000. The institutions are commuter and residential, single campus and multi-campus, small colleges, comprehensive teaching universities, and Research I doctoral institutions.

My career has been guided by a dedication to effective student development and a personal commitment to inspire and empower students. Going beyond the formal requirements of my roles in student affairs, I have mentored many former students in their individual pursuit of learning and development. I feel a deep sense of pride when they tell me that I was instrumental in helping them overcome personal, family, and academic challenges; persist in their endeavors; graduate from college, and launch their careers.

Moreover, I have devoted efforts toward mentoring groups of students, conducting student success workshops, creating and teaching a new leadership development course, and advising a wide range of pre-professional and social student organizations, including residence hall associations, student governments, and campus activities boards. In addition to being personally rewarding, mentoring affords me the opportunity to better understand the experience of students, both as individuals and as members of particular communities on campus.

It gives me great satisfaction to have a record of equipping students with the necessary skills to achieve their academic goals and become engaged citizen-leaders within our pluralistic society. The attached reference list includes some of these students in addition to supervisors and colleagues.

I look forward to the opportunity to further discuss with you how I can contribute to UWM in this position. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nolan L. Davis