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JR10007946 - Assistant Vice Chancellor for Connection & Achievement

Candidate Name	Candidate ID	Attachments
1. Jonathan Dunn	C10065023	

Jonathan Dunn
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Dear Vice Chancellor Haag and Members of the Search Committee,

Please accept this letter of interest for the position of Assistant Vice Chancellor for Connection & Achievement position at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. I am drawn to this opportunity to lead a student focused support structure that strengthens connection, improves coordination of services, and advances student success from initial interest through graduation. Throughout my career, my work has centered on building collaborative systems that align people, strategy, and resources in service of students, particularly those navigating complex institutional environments.

In my current role at UWM, I lead and direct institution-wide initiatives that sit at the intersection of academic affairs, student success, and community partnership. Through work such as the M Cubed partnership with Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee Area Technical College and University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, I collaborate with campus leaders, faculty, academic staff, and external partners to design and implement strategies that address systemic barriers to student persistence and completion. This work requires aligning institutional or unit priorities and efforts with institutional goals, designing actionable plans, and supporting shared accountability for outcomes. These experiences closely reflect the functional leadership needed to support the development and long term success of the new Student Success Center.

Previously, I held a similar role as Program Director for the Higher Education Regional Alliance (HERA), an alliance of eighteen colleges and universities in southeastern Wisconsin. Over the course of four years, I worked with senior leaders to adopt evidence-based practices to increase student success. This experience strengthened my ability to implement complex efforts across multiple institutions, build trust among diverse stakeholders, track outcomes and sustain momentum around shared goals that directly support student achievement.

The vision for the new Student Success Center strongly aligns with my professional goals. I am particularly drawn to the center's emphasis on continuity of care, identity affirming programming, and meaningful connection between students, campus resources, and the broader community. I have consistently worked in environments where students are best served when support is coordinated, accessible, and grounded in a sense of belonging and see this as an opportunity to steward a new structure for today's students that creates an even more cohesive and responsive experience at UWM.

I bring a collaborative leadership approach to partnering with senior leaders, supporting staff, or coordinating across units. I will ensure strategy remains anchored in student experience while advancing institutional priorities. I welcome the opportunity to contribute this perspective to UWM's continued efforts to ensure all students experience the university as a place where they are supported, valued, and able to thrive.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my experience and approach could support the goals of connection and achievement at UWM.

Respectfully,

Jonathan Dunn

Jonathan Paul Dunn

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Committed educational leader with extensive experience leading institution level initiatives focused on student success, access, and belonging. Proven ability to align strategy, data, and partnerships across academic affairs, student facing units, and community organizations to support student persistence and completion. Recognized for collaborative leadership, systems thinking, and a sustained focus on improving outcomes for first generation and underrepresented students. Committed to being reflective, curious and persistent.

Professional Experience:

Sr. Manager, Educational Collaborations

2024-Present

Partnerships & Initiatives Program Manager

2021-2024

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) - Academic Affairs

Milwaukee, WI

Guides UWM's collaborative initiatives with [M-Cubed](#) and the [Higher Educational Regional Alliance \(HERA\)](#) to advance student access and success. Drives strategic program design, metric development and stakeholder engagement.

- **Strategic Initiative Oversight:** In coordination with UWM leadership, spearheads initiatives targeting first-generation and underrepresented student retention and persistence. Developed measures to monitor progress, assess data, and adjust strategies based on outcomes. Strategies include addressing systemic issues, financial and administrative barriers, proactive advising, and supportive student onboarding.
- **Cross-Institutional Leadership:** Leads institution-wide initiatives aligning academic affairs, student success strategies, and external partnerships; including the collaboration with UWM, MATC, and Milwaukee Public Schools to address workforce needs and reduce postsecondary access barriers. Provides Functional Leadership to drive outcomes with internal and external administrators and academic staff.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Serves as a primary convener and strategic liaison with internal and external partners, including academic leadership and community organizations, to align resources and ensure cohesive programmatic alignment for diverse student populations. Created collaborative spaces and facilitated data-informed conversations that directly impacted institutional performance.
- **Standard Operating Procedures:** Direct strategic planning, performance metrics, and accountability structures across multiple stakeholder groups, ensuring alignment with institutional priorities and measurable student outcomes.
- **Communication and Outreach:** Engage with campus communication professionals to support their communications plans which may involve diverse communication strategies including websites, newsletters, digital media, and outlet media. Provide support and input for proposals and presentations to be used for local and national recognition and outreach.
- **Resource Development:** Monitor and manage financial resources for collaborations and initiatives including oversight and accountability for grant awards, in-kind support, and other sources of funds. Provide support and input for fund development by identifying and securing outside funding to support the work.
- **Change Management:** Support complex change management associated with cross institutional partnership work, including aligning governance structures, timelines, communication, and shared accountability while maintaining a consistent focus on student experience.

Program Director

Higher Education Regional Alliance (HERA)

2018-2022

Milwaukee, WI

In partnership with the HERA Chair, founded and led a strategic alliance of 18 presidents and chancellors from southeastern Wisconsin's two- and four-year public and private colleges, universities, and HERA's network of partner organizations. Drove collaborative efforts to reduce achievement gaps and develop an agile, innovative workforce that aligns with regional industry needs.

- **Program Development & Data-Driven Strategy:** Oversaw the implementation of initiatives to improve student access, persistence, and success through data-informed methods, including regular metrics tracking and program adaptation. Established [metrics and strategies](#) including credit accumulation (15 to Finish), gateway course completion, proactive advising, and time towards a degree. For example, since 2019, regional graduation rates for African American and Latino/Latina students have increased by an average of 5%.
- **Leadership & Coordination:** Facilitated alignment across campuses through strategic coordination of institutional liaisons, driving collaborative success toward shared student achievement goals. Worked closely with the HERA Steering Committee to set priorities, monitor progress, and adjust strategies. Oversaw the development of strategic work plans and critical milestones, maintained accountability for outcomes, and supervised consultants to enhance project quality.
- **Community & Funder Relations:** Acted as the primary liaison with funders and community stakeholders, promoting HERA's mission through presentations, reports, and proposal development. Secured continued support and raised \$400,000 in funding to advance initiatives.
- **Consortium Ambassador & Evidence-Based Practices:** Advocated for HERA's mission through strategic communications with partner institutions and regional networks. Promoted evidence-based student success practices across the alliance, fostering professional learning and information sharing.

Project Manager

Greater Milwaukee Foundation – Milwaukee Succeeds

2015-2021

Milwaukee, WI

Led community collaboration efforts through Milwaukee Succeeds to improve postsecondary access, success, and support for all youth within Milwaukee. Utilized data-driven strategies to concentrate resources on high-impact initiatives that prepared children and the community for long-term success.

- **Collaborative Action Networks:** Convened and led networks to identify high-impact strategies, applying continuous improvement processes to address postsecondary educational access and success gaps, including systemic issues for access populations. Facilitated regular planning meetings, identified service gaps, and built consensus around strategies to drive meaningful change. An example includes MPS's continued success around FAFSA completion. As of August 2024, 59% of MPS seniors in the Class of 2024 completed the FAFSA, surpassing both the national rate of 50% and Wisconsin's rate of 44%; thus, unlocking greater access to college.
- **Program Coordination & Partnerships:** Built partnerships with government, corporate, and educational stakeholders, ensuring data-driven, collaborative approaches to achieve community goals.
- **Funding & Reporting:** Partnered with the Funder's Collaborative to secure grants, manage reporting, and drive accountability for program outcomes. Developed grant allocation plans, served as liaison to grant-funded organizations, and oversaw reporting of progress and outcomes.
- **Youth Engagement:** Established and supported the Opportunity Youth Network, establishing re-engagement pathways to enhance educational and career readiness opportunities for underserved youth in the community.

Director 2013-2015
Associate Director 2010-2013
 Cardinal Stritch University Milwaukee, WI
 Southeastern Wisconsin New Teacher Project (SEWNTP)
Directed teacher induction and mentoring programs for 25 local school districts in partnership with Stritch's School of Education and the New Teacher Center. Led efforts to enhance teacher effectiveness and ensure student success through targeted support for beginning teachers, mentors, and districts.

- **Professional Development & Curriculum Design:** Co-designed and facilitated learning opportunities for teachers, mentors, and district leaders, grounded in best practices for teacher induction. Developed and delivered targeted training sessions focused on evidence-based instructional strategies to improve teacher retention and student outcomes.
- **Program Evaluation & Accountability:** Established a comprehensive program evaluation model using formative and summative assessments to inform continuous improvement. Leveraged data to refine induction practices, achieving measurable gains in teacher engagement and effectiveness.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration & Leadership:** Maintained regular communication with superintendents, program leaders, and stakeholders through newsletters, reports, and digital updates. Collaborated with school districts to tailor induction programs to meet district-specific goals and to secure ongoing support and buy-in.
- **Data-Driven Adaptation:** Monitored program metrics, adapting strategies based on evaluation data to support the evolving needs of participating schools.
- **Team Leadership & Staff Supervision:** Directly supervised and mentored a team of professional staff and facilitators, ensuring high-quality delivery of induction programs and professional development initiatives supporting local school districts.

High School Program Coordinator 2009-2010
Mentor/Instructional Coach 2008-2010
 Urban Education Fellows Program Milwaukee, WI
Oversaw the expansion of a teacher certification program into high schools, co-sponsored by Alverno and Mount Mary Colleges, to improve educational quality in independent, private, and charter schools.

- **Program Expansion & Collaboration:** Led program expansion into high schools and fostered partnerships with school principals to align with district and state standards.
- **Teacher Development & Mentorship:** Observed and coached teachers, providing targeted feedback and improvement plans to promote student-centered, rigorous instruction. Developed self-reflection processes and conducted workshops on best practices, enhancing instructional quality across diverse subjects, grade levels, and students.

Teacher and Curriculum Chair 2003-2008
 Milwaukee College Prep Milwaukee, WI
 KIPP DC, Friendship Public Charter Washington, DC
Educated diverse K-12 students, implementing rigorous standards-based instruction and curriculum aligned with state and district requirements.

- **Instructional Leadership:** Designed and taught the district's first AP Macroeconomics course for public school students, increasing access to advanced coursework for 11th- and 12th-grade students.
- **Staff Supervision & Professional Development:** Coordinated curriculum and professional development for Social Studies faculty, focusing on literacy, inquiry, and critical thinking. Mentored teachers and conducted regular feedback sessions to align teaching with rigorous academic standards.
- **Equity and Access:** Promoted inclusive and engaging learning environments, focused on developing critical thinking and inquiry skills among students from underserved backgrounds.

Education:

- **Master of Secondary Education in Social Studies** University of Florida - 2003
- **Bachelor of Arts in History** University of Florida - 2002
- **Bachelor of Arts in Economics** University of Florida - 2002