

July 23, 2024

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I am writing to express my sincere interest in the position of Vice President for Finance and Business Affairs/Chief Financial Officer at Winthrop University. With a career spanning the private and non-profit sectors, including 16 years of service in public higher education, I bring a wealth of experience gained at various levels of responsibility. Not only do I possess the acumen necessary to set and achieve strategic goals, but I also have the proven ability to lead the day-to-day operations, implement rigorous budget planning, and foster adept financial management practices, creating a unified and dynamic environment that will ensure the resounding success of Winthrop's mission.

I am currently the Senior Director of Business & Research Operations at the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center (JCCC). In this role I oversee eight directors and 18 staff members, who are working a hybrid schedule and are responsible for all business and research operations. In partnership with the Center's Director and Chief Administrative Officer, I have created an effective and robust infrastructure to provide seamless administrative services aimed at advancing the mission and strategic goals of the JCCC. Furthermore, I serve on UCLA's Ascend 2.0 Financial System Transformation Committee, utilizing Oracle to modernize the university's accounting and reporting.

As my references will attest, I can build strong partnerships with colleagues at all institutional levels, including central administration, center directors, deans, chairs and staff. I have made customer service, a positive work-culture, honesty, and transparency my core professional values. As I have done in all my roles, I will make it my priority to develop a trusting environment where faculty, staff, and leadership can successfully collaborate on strategic initiatives and processes that benefit Winthrop and its students.

During my tenure at George Mason University (GMU), I served as a strong partner to four deans and their advisory committees. I was heavily engaged in GMU initiatives to support significant enrollment growth and expand research. At GMU, I grew professionally as a leader and along with my team created an outstanding budget and finance operation that included research administration, and is still recognized university-wide, often serving as a model for other colleges. Because of my solution-centered approach, attentiveness, efficiency, professionalism and a genuine commitment to outstanding customer service, most faculty invariably reached out to me (or my team) before reaching out to anyone else in the College, or GMU.

I believe in accuracy and transparency in budgeting and financial management while preserving confidentiality. I also espouse an attitude of collaboration and strategic thinking to foster growth and compliance. As a leader, I have and will continue to foster an inclusive environment so that students, staff and faculty are provided opportunities and feel comfortable to share their ideas.

Below is a brief description of some of my relevant contributions:

- To enhance transparency and foster an informed inclusive professional environment at the JCCC: 1) I implemented monthly in-person staff days to promote information exchange

and culture building, which is of particular importance to hybrid work schedules. 2) I assessed and added resources in several areas, and restructured both the HR and Finance teams to enable better planning, forecasting and services for the UCLA cancer community. 3) I implemented fundamental changes that, for the first time, enabled leadership to have access to one-glance snapshots of the Center's finances.

- To enhance accountability, I have allocated budgets and authority to each area director within the JCCC (all of whom report to me) providing them with the necessary training to ensure meticulous financial planning and resource allocation.
- To foster inclusiveness at the GMU College of Science: I worked with the dean to create two Chief Diversity Officer positions, one for faculty and one for staff. These were the first positions of their kind at Mason and predated the University's initiatives that was implemented a few years later. Moreover, I found the financial resources to establish three scholarships for undergraduate students from underprivileged backgrounds.
- I led the College of Science's Budget & Planning Committee, as well as the Equipment Purchase Committee, both comprised of chairs, center directors and faculty members. These committees were vital to strategic investments, disseminating information and obtaining buy-in from most of the College's constituents. Additionally, I helped to establish the Research Advisory Council to inform decisions regarding strategic investments in specific scientific areas; and informed the Dean's Advisory Council, which was primarily comprised of research scientist external to COS and GMU.
- To strategically fund new equipment, I implemented the College's science fee for all 200-level and above classes. These funds were invested after review of the equipment requests by the College's Budget & Planning Committee.
- In support of the College's plan for growth in research and education, I put together attractive startup packages using both one-time funds and ongoing funds to recruit the best and diverse faculty.
- In order to enable students to participate in real-world problem solving, I helped to create and fund the College's research scholarship for undergraduates.
- To strategically grow research, I successfully managed the necessary resources that allowed the dean to hire of multiple research clusters and consequently growing the College's research expenditures from \$5 to \$34M within a decade. In fact, the research growth of the College of Science was one of the main reasons that Mason achieved an R1 classification in 2016.
- To strategically support mission success and retain talent, I identified the financial resources to enable effective recruitment and retention of faculty and staff, even when resources were limited. I am skilled at analyzing how short-term investments can potentially translate into long-term successes.
- To empower and recognize the valuable contributions of the colleagues whom I supervised, I held collaborative planning and implementation meetings, so that all participants felt that they were a valuable part of the decision-making process. I am committed to the well-being and professional development of the colleagues on my team and have worked tirelessly to provide optimal career growth paths for my staff, including promoting highly capable and well-trained colleagues and providing training and career development workshops. Moreover, in partnership with the Office of Sponsored Programs and a few of my peers from other colleges, I was an active contributor to the creation of research administrator certificates and taught the financial compliance sections of these.

- To support the research mission: 1) I created a time-tracking model that works as a supplement to effort reporting so that GMU central leadership agreed to accept multi-million-dollar Time & Material research awards. 2) The College of Science had the largest number of postdocs at GMU. As such, I initiated and led a university-wide initiative to overhaul and streamline the postdoc hiring process to facilitate research growth.
- To incentivize research growth, I worked closely with the dean to develop a new indirect policy that incentivizes research growth and more effectively utilizes current available fund balances.
- To recruit outstanding graduate students, I identified ongoing funds to increase the number of graduate students, as well as their stipends.
- Along with other senior leaders across the university, I served on multiple committees to support the University Budget & Planning Advisory Committee to improve efficiency, strengthen research infrastructure, prioritize strategic investments, facilitate growth, and develop policies to advance the University's mission. The relevant committees on which I served included the Research Infrastructure and Funding Model Working Group, the Cost Center Management Group and the Research Administration Software Systems Selection Group.
- To mitigate risk and improve compliance with the university's Reconciliation Policy, I developed the process to accurately reconcile all funds (looking at both expenses that had been posted and expenses that had not yet posted) and implemented a formal tracking and incentive policy to ensure timely and accurate reconciliation throughout the College.

As evidenced by the above, I am confident that my expertise in finance, business management, budget and strategic planning, as well as my openness and ability to partner with colleagues from all levels and areas will allow me to make a positive impact on the future of Winthrop University. I would like to thank you in advance for reconsidering my candidacy for this critical role and look forward to hearing from you.

Warm regards,

Ute Shaw