

November 7, 2023

Search Committee  
Dean, College of Allied Health Sciences  
University of Cincinnati

Dear Search Committee,

I am writing to express my sincere interest in the Dean position in the College of Allied Health Sciences (CAHS) at the University of Cincinnati. As a 3-time alumnus of the university, I have 20 years of experience as an educator and 15 years as an administrator in CAHS which has equipped me with unique qualifications that have been instrumental in my own personal development and honing of my leadership skills.

As a first-generation student, I entered UC with a desire to make an impact on patients and their families by becoming an allied health professional. My discipline interests evolved, however opportunities to teach and engage with Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) students while completing my doctoral work in the UC College of Medicine ignited my passion for higher education. In this space, I can impact students, their education and their future social mobility with education and employment in allied health professions. Equally rewarding is observing how the upward trajectory of our graduates, both traditional and non-traditional, expands to impact their families, their patients, and the allied health workforce. I've served in several leadership positions with increasing levels of responsibility including new program development; program assessment and continuous quality improvement; programmatic accreditation; revenue and growth strategy development; financial and program administrative processes and procedures development, implementation, and revision; faculty and staff recruitment, development and retention; student recruitment, retention and graduation; and program and college leadership across the roles of program director, academic unit head, associate dean of academic affairs, and in my current role of interim dean.

#### *Leadership Style*

My leadership style centers on inclusion, transparency, listening, respectful discourse, collaboration, and intentional teaming. As a leader charged with the overall success of our complex college comprised of 3400+ students; 30+ degree programs; 14 programmatic accreditations; 100+ full-time faculty; 50+ staff and 100s of adjuncts, I am intentional in creating teams comprised of our resident experts in their areas of expertise. I respect, value, and encourage their contributions. I am committed to transparency in process and decision making, planning, and outcome assessment and regularly share information with our stakeholders. I am an empathetic listener and partner who values discourse as it's critical to working through challenging situations and in problem-solving. I highly value the diversity of perspectives and ideas and believe that success is achieved when working as part of a team with similar goals. I am a data-informed leader. As we make decisions that affect students, staff and faculty, utilizing and analyzing the available data can help to guide our decisions and also provides a framework to assess the outcomes of revisions. Increasingly integrated dashboards and university systems are powerful tools. With a focus on increasing retention and graduation, utilizing academic analytic dashboards and data allow us to identify challenges, trends, and successes to guide continuous quality improvement processes.

A recent team-based project was to lead the analysis and revision of our college's ten-year Strategic Growth Plan. Initial analyses indicated significant shifts in initial projections due to external factors. I elected to lead the units through a deep dive into recruitment, retention, graduation rates, student performance assessment, and external market and discipline factors. The outcomes of the analyses were updated projections, identification of barriers to student success and strategies to reduce them, and curriculum revisions to improve marketing, recruitment, and admissions outcomes. Additionally, this work informed the creation of the CAHS Students Success Circle (discussed later), new admissions pathways, and strategic

scholarship opportunities. Other successful team-based projects where I led, or built the team, include CAHS Scholarship Strategies; COVID-19 Operations Management; Interprofessional Community Clinic formation; continuous quality improvement activities in CAHS non-academic units; and programmatic accreditation support.

### *Teaching*

My academic career was initially focused on teaching and program excellence as an educator track faculty member in the discipline of medical laboratory sciences in campus and online modalities. My responsibilities as a program director included working annually with adjuncts to develop courses, student support, utilization of consistent course design and delivery, equity across student sections and assessment, overall program evaluation, and adherence to program accreditation. I developed and implemented adjunct onboarding and annual review processes.

My experience in online program development and management began in 2003 with the creation and launch of the MLS AS to BS Completion Program as part of a three-member faculty team. In collaboration with an external OPM, I advised on marketing assets, curriculum and course design, program procedures, while ensuring compliance with accreditation standards. I quickly became a resident consultant for other faculty teaching in online courses and was integral to the formation of the CAHS Instructional Design Team. In 2018, UC ended external OPM partnerships and I was appointed as the Associate Dean of eLearning where I was responsible for facilitating the development of online programs from inception through admission; serving as the college administrator for Cincinnati Online and Pearson academic partnerships; overseeing online student recruitment and retention efforts; partnering with online program directors; facilitation of articulations agreements; and cross-college collaborations for online programs.

### *Student Success*

Student success is my passion and drives my priorities and actions across the college. Recently, I have focused on designing and allocating resources to build a circle of support model around our undergraduate students to expand to graduate students in the future. The Student Success Circle is an intentional, intertwined student support model which includes activities with multiple checkpoints, academic and social support, and strong communication across the team. This new position in CAHS, and associated activities are partially funded through a UC Inclusive Leadership Challenge Grant. The expected outcomes include a reduction in achievement and retention gaps in five diverse and underrepresented student populations and an increase in engagement and sense of belonging for students, staff, and faculty.

I have also led teams to analyze curricula, retention, and student success to identify strategies to increase retention and graduation rates. Typically, the analysis includes a review of academic analytic data, anticipated financial and resource impact of revisions, implementation timelines, potential barriers, and unintended consequences of revisions. In these processes, I utilize a teaming approach where central administrators work alongside program faculty and staff to conduct the analysis, identify options, and implement any modifications. Most revisions were beneficial, increased retention and graduation with minimal expense and remain to date, whereas others required additional revision.

One of my major projects this year centers on the role that all play in student success in the five areas of: Access, Attention, Retention, Graduation and Post-Graduation. To affect and support change, it's essential that our teams are valued, respected, feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and realize their role in their areas of responsibility. Faculty are essential through teaching but are also integral to the student experience and success through research opportunities, clinical experiences, student organization leadership, and mentoring. Staff are critical to student support for registration, scholarships, classroom scheduling, equipment procurement, and student interactions. At our all-college retreat, I led the faculty and staff through exercises to identify their role in student success and strategize new activities to further support success.

Expanding interprofessional education, engagement, and collaboration are also priorities in my role. Our graduates must be prepared to excel in diverse team environments integral to health care settings. The CAHS team has created educational and engagement opportunities for students and continue to identify collaborative partners within and outside of the university to expand the opportunities. Partnerships with the Colleges of Pharmacy, Nursing and Medicine and the community continue to evolve and strengthen. I have led CAHS involvement on the UC Public Health Interdisciplinary Team which is a partnership of 10 colleges charged with executing the undergraduate Public Health program, where I served as a co-chair of the workgroup and currently serve on the executive and advisory boards. I am committed to inclusive, interdisciplinary and interprofessional activities as they are essential to preparing our graduates for their professional

careers, provide an increase in opportunities for faculty collaborations and engagement, and more importantly, allows for us to develop and provide high caliber programs that capitalize and showcase the university's talent and expertise.

#### *Staff development*

Staff are integral to our team. I have demonstrated my commitment to ongoing staff development, career laddering, and equity across CAHS. As an Associate Dean, I led the restructuring of the Center for Educational Technology and Instructional Support (CETIS, now IDATS) in response to changing priorities of the college. This involved an analysis of job titles, responsibilities, service needs, central support, resources, and development opportunities in the instructional design and information technology areas and resulted in the creation of a new administrative structure, implementation of career ladders, and equity adjustments and promotions. Furthermore, through the analysis of service needs, processes and procedures were created and implemented including asset tracking, equipment refreshes, service SOPs, ServiceNow implementation, strategic plan development, and an expansion of service support.

As the Interim Dean, I led the process to evaluate and develop a tiered salary structure for program coordinators and managers based on job responsibilities and experience, and successfully advocated for several equity adjustments and promotions, along with implementing a timeline for future adjustments. During the review, a central identified need was ongoing staff development to increase belonging and skill growth. Currently, a college-wide staff development project is underway which includes development of a CAHS Staff Council, increased governance opportunities and professional development opportunities to increase belonging, as well as skill advancement.

#### *Faculty*

Faculty are our talent. I have demonstrated my commitment to faculty excellence and continual development in the areas of teaching, service, scholarship, and research. As a unit head, I implemented the use of an RPT activity tracker as a tool in the APR process to guide discussions, identify and support individual development needs, and prepare faculty for successful reappointment and promotion reviews. I implemented a programmatic adjunct review process which was expanded to CAHS online programs and disseminated across the university. I secured development funds for faculty to participate in leadership programs internal and external to the university. As an associate dean during the pandemic, I lead the CETIS team in creation of support for faculty and staff in the rapid pivot to online operations.

Currently, my role is focused on equity, sponsorship, support, and resource procurement for faculty teaching and performing research. Key achievements include the allocation of additional professional development funds for faculty, sponsorship in leadership development programs, overhaul of start-up package negotiation process and support, procurement of additional resources from the Office of Research and Graduate College, and partnership with unit heads to support course release for special projects or research needs. Currently, I am engaged in assessing faculty workload to support an expansion in our research portfolio and production, doctoral program growth, student research excellence, faculty retention and our research support infrastructure. Additional priorities include exploring new models for tenure-track workload to increase research time as well as identifying development plans for educator faculty interested in expanding research activities.

#### *Fiscal Responsibility*

Most decisions have an associated fiscal impact. Resource allocation to impact retention, curriculum, program growth, faculty and staff hiring, student support initiatives, research support, workload adjustments, all require assessment of the data and potential ROI.

Analyzing the fiscal impact of activities, identifying efficiencies, and assessing resource allocation are essential ongoing activities. As a unit head, I created and implemented a multi-year workload and enrollment planning tool to aid in forecasting, especially designed for online programs utilizing carousel curricula. The outcome of the implementation included improved budget planning, reduction in adjunct costs, procurement of course revision budget, and improved HR related processes. As an associate dean, I collaborated with program directors to revise curricula to reduce student tuition costs, decrease faculty costs, increase student support, reduce time to degree, and create innovative program options to expand student opportunities and increase growth. As a dean, I have procured resources for additional research equipment, secured funding for new program launches, increased FTE in student support positions, implemented recruitment and retention scholarship programs utilizing scholarship funds, revised CAHS budgeting and tracking processes, allocated carryforward funds to support college infrastructure and teaching needs with collaboration of my administrative team. Currently, we are revising the budget process to include capital and non-capital equipment lifecycle

replacement plans. Additional efforts include engagement and fundraising with the UC Foundation and CAHS Leadership Council to identify and seek alternate program support through alumni, partnerships, and fundraising opportunities.

#### *CAHS Future*

The strength of CAHS lies in our team and aligning our priorities with Next Lives Here. CAHS faculty and staff are dedicated to excellence in teaching, collaborative service, impactful scholarship, and innovative research. We are committed to the Bearcat Promise and continuously assess our priorities to ensure all our students are supported and prepared for their careers and are equipped to work and excel in diverse, interprofessional allied health settings. We strive to continue positively impact Urban Health through service-learning, clinical experiential learning, curriculum partnerships within the Public Health program, pathways with UC colleges, regional partners, local high schools, and community engagement and research partnerships. Our researchers are committed to innovative basic research, clinical research, and community research to transform health care and the communities we serve.

I am excited to have the opportunity to serve CAHS in the role of Dean and expand our impact by engaging in teaching excellence, elevating our program offerings and rankings, supporting high impact service activities, fostering community engagement and fundraising, increasing innovative and impactful research activities and resources to align with the mission and vision of the college and university. I look forward to discussing how my skills and experience can help continue to drive academic success, foster growth, and accelerate our impact in the field of allied health sciences. Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charity Accurso". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charity" and last name "Accurso" clearly legible.

Charity Accurso, PhD, MLS(ASCP)<sup>cm</sup>  
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