

January 9, 2024

Parker Executive Search

Attn: University of Cincinnati CAHS Dean Search Committee

Five Concourse Parkway, Suite 2875

Atlanta, GA 30328

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

I am pleased to submit my application for the position of Dean of the College of Allied Health Sciences (CAHS) at the University of Cincinnati (UC). The position description specifies a set of characteristics, leadership skills, and professional accomplishments that align well with my own experience and interests. The CAHS mission and vision of impactful research, student-centered learning, community engagement, and inclusive excellence is compelling. The university's vision of leading urban public universities into a new era of innovation and impact is powerful and galvanizing. Furthermore, the "Next Lives Here" is distinctive, articulating values, plans and goals that I hold dear and that have guided me throughout my academic life—and, more specifically, during my tenure as a department head and a program director.

In my current role as the Department Head and the preceding 11 years as the Doctoral Program Director of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) at James Madison University (JMU), I have played a leading role in transforming the department by implementing initiatives that significantly enhanced academic programs, scholarly productivity, inclusive excellence, and community engagement. Under my leadership, the external grant funding more than doubled during the past two years and we secured significant private funds to support clinical operations and scholarships. Notably, we achieved the increased scholarly productivity as JMU transitioned to a high-research university in 2022. My approach to data-driven decision-making has gained the attention of my superiors. Effective utilization of data has allowed my department to receive an unprecedented two new faculty lines and one administrative assistant position during the current academic year. I was invited by the University to facilitate a session on data-driven decision making for all academic unit heads at JMU.

My efforts to enhance inclusive excellence is evident in my efforts to establish a sustainable pipeline of first generation and minority students. I have also expanded my area of scholarship to include diversity and access which has resulted in upcoming conference presentations. I am eager to bring this dedication to the College of Allied Health Sciences, where creating an inclusive environment is integral to fostering future healthcare leaders.

As you will note from my *curriculum vitae*, I am a clinically trained Audiologist and Speech Language Pathologist educated in two different continents. My background and academic training in both professions and two different cultures has allowed me to develop a unique set of skills transferable to and essential in academic administration: the ability to collaborate, willingness to delegate, and the ability to take charge during difficult times. I consider my willingness to listen intently and to maintain

calm under stress as my strongest leadership traits. I hope you will see how my diverse background informs my approach to leadership and collegial style that would fit well into the College and the University. If chosen as the next dean, I will focus my energies in strengthening the national reputation of the college's academic programs, collaborating with other colleges and programs on campus, and advocating for the faculty and students while making a concerted effort toward achieving the inclusive excellence goals and fundraising. In a number of important ways, my 12½ years in departmental administration has prepared me for leading an interdisciplinary college like the CAHS.

I have also maintained an active research laboratory where we are interested in studying hearing aid technology and its impact on patient benefit and satisfaction. Currently, there are two Ph.D., three Au.D., and two undergraduate Honors students working in my research laboratory along with external collaborators from universities within the US and India, and the hearing aid industry. I also pride myself as a passionate teacher educating my students as future colleagues. My teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels has earned high accolades including several nominations for university and college-wide teaching awards.

I believe that my experiences and accomplishments would translate seamlessly to the Dean's position at the CAHS, specifically the overarching vision of community engagement, scholarly impact, student-centered teaching, and inclusive excellence. To that end, I list some of my most relevant administrative and academic credentials below, which align with the required qualifications for the position of the CAHS Dean.

- I am experienced in all three levels of academic programming – undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degrees. The AuD and MS SLP programs at JMU are ranked #20 and #32, respectively by the US News and World Report. I have also devoted significant time to sustain an innovative PhD program that attracts international and domestic students alike. I also directly supervise our online SLP program which is ranked highly for return on investment. These programs have allowed me the opportunity to engage in interprofessional collaboration across the different departments in the College of Health and Behavioral Studies and beyond at JMU. I have mentored more than 25 Doctoral students (PhD and AuD) in their dissertation projects.
- I have experience with strategic planning processes, both at the University level and locally. I am skilled at balancing open-minded and “big-picture” thinking with ambitious metrics and benchmarks. I value entrepreneurial leadership, recognizing that not all projects succeed, but that valuable lessons can be acquired through collaborative analysis. Institutions are much more stable and healthier when there are collectively-developed systems, policies and processes in place to support all team members.
- I have significant experience in new program development and curricular changes at the state and University levels. These experiences include new course proposals, credit hour changes to the doctoral program, and a new undergraduate program. I have also been a part of three

accreditation site visits at JMU. The first one was the Council of Academic Accreditation (CAA) site visit of my department in 2009, and the second one was the University's regional accreditation by SACSCOC in 2013. The most recent one was the CAA site visit in spring of 2018. My primary role was report writing and extensive documentation in preparation for the site visit.

- I have developed significant skills in resource management, working creatively and effectively to manage the departmental budget at JMU. I have managed the departmental graduate assistantships for PhD, AuD, and MS students which has allowed me to gain deep understanding of the federal and state regulations, domestic and international student funding guidelines, and working with three different offices on campus (financial aid, graduate school, and student employment). My experience with broad consultation and strategic prioritization would inform my approach to budget management at UC.
- As a strong proponent of inclusive excellence, I have committed significant time to update my knowledge and skills related to DEI. I was selected as an inaugural JMU College of Health and Behavioral Studies L.E.A.D. Fellow in 2021 to develop leadership skills with a DEI lens. I am a founding member of the JMU Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) faculty caucus. This caucus was formed after a series of hatred directed toward people of Asian and Indian descent.
- I have had substantial experience in development. Philanthropists are primarily interested in supporting programs and students, and I am an effective, relentless, and enthusiastic fundraiser and "friend-raiser." In close collaboration with the JMU development office, I have secured recurring large funds from the Scottish Rite, Lions Club, and private donors.
- I oversaw the modernization of the JMU audiology and SLP clinical operations by implementing electronic medical records, VALT camera observation system, and insurance billing. Early in my career as the program director, I successfully transitioned our graduate admission to an online Centralized Application Service, and the clinical hours tracking to a cloud based third party vendor.
- Program Assessment and Reporting: JMU's Center for Assessment Research Studies (CARS) is renowned for academic assessment and reporting. I am experienced in effective program assessment and outcome reporting as a result of more than 12 years of collaboration with JMU CARS.
- As a naturalized American citizen, and a global traveler, I am passionate about international education, and work closely with JMU's Center for Global Engagement in recruitment and retention of international students, as well as in developing study abroad programs.

- I have served as an expert for media outlets in educating the public about hearing loss and hearing aids. Some of the notable mentions were in: Local news (WHSV TV), AARP magazine, Erickson Living magazine, WebMD, and USA Today (forthcoming).

I believe strongly in collective and collaborative leadership, and in the vital importance of shared governance. I work best with open, direct, and honest dialogue; and believe that all constituents are stronger when issues can be debated openly and respectfully. Success is more likely when all stakeholders feel trusted and empowered.

I hope this letter of application conveys my enthusiasm for the College of Allied Health Sciences. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my vision and experiences align with the College's strategic objectives and the broader mission of the University of Cincinnati. Please feel free to contact me (email: ayasakanta.rout@gmail.com; cell: (540) 429-0412) if you need any further information. Thank you for your consideration of my application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ayasakanta Rout', written in a cursive style.

Ayasakanta Rout, Ph.D.
Professor and Head
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
James Madison University