

March 3, 2023

Search Committee: Snow College President
Utah Board of Higher Education and Snow College Trustees
snowpresidentsearch@ushe.edu

Dear Search Committee:

Please accept this application for the position of Snow College President. I am a hometown applicant who, along with my family, would be honored to make a long-term commitment to serving in the role, which, for us, is a destination job and location. It is a great privilege to be nominated by my friend, supervisor, and Utah Tech University (UT) President, Dr. Richard "Biff" Williams, and also by my mentor and former Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) Commissioner, Dr. Richard Kendell. My qualifications with respect to education and experience match closely those in the position announcement. Below, I have highlighted aspects of my background that are relevant to the position.

I am from Ephraim, graduated from Manti High School, and am a proud Badger alumnus along with my siblings. The parents and grandparents of my spouse, Janalyn, are from Monroe and Richfield. My father worked at Snow College in several capacities both in Ephraim and Richfield for twenty-five years. One of my earliest summer jobs was working as a custodian for Snow College. At one point in the late 1980s, I had cleaned close to every square inch of campus! I reaped the benefits of learning in Snow College classrooms from professors who know your name and genuinely care about you such as: Rick Wheeler, Renee Faatz, Paul Gardner, Bob Trythall, Lynn Poulson, Gary Parnell, Michael Seibt, John Meade, Ted Olson, Dan Witt, and more. My first job in higher education was at Snow as a part-time recruiter which entailed hosting and sharing orientation information with prospective Snow students and their families. I have a heartfelt appreciation for the exceptional education Snow provided me in the 1990s and which it continues to provide the unique demographics of its current and potential students in a beautiful, rural setting. It is the community's college with a rich history, a consequential mission among the USHE institutions, and an exciting future proclaiming that "those who find Snow College will find themselves." As others have declared, **Snow College is small enough to know you, large enough to serve you.**

My acquisition of knowledge and skills regarding higher education leadership has developed as a result of my work in many different settings. I have more than a decade of experience leading at the cabinet level, focusing on internal institutional administration, as well as a decade of experience serving in external and government relations roles. I have benefitted greatly from my work at UT, primarily a teaching and dual-mission institution, at the University of Oregon (UO), primarily a doctoral-level research university, at three different state higher education system offices in Nevada, Oregon, and Utah, and in K-12 education. I experienced the benefits of job-training and technical education while working part-time at Bridgerland Technical College in Logan while pursuing my bachelor's degree at Utah State University. My graduate education in public administration, higher education finance and leadership, law, and policy complements my professional experience. The aptitude and skills I have gained over the years in the various settings would enable me to renew and develop meaningful institutional and community relationships in a short amount of time and contribute effectively as the Snow College President.

As Associate Vice President of Executive Affairs/Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees at UT, I am the UT President's trusted confidante and am involved in the preparation, planning, and decision-making of virtually all aspects of a Chief Executive Officer's portfolio. I am President Williams' right arm. He is the most courageous and effective university president I have known. I am grateful that he has valued me as a central presidential partner for the past eight years since I began employment at UT in 2015. From the beginning, I have been involved in every minor and major decision and initiative in what has been a daily master class on leadership from a nationally recognized presidential mentor. This has been a singular opportunity to prepare me for the Snow College presidency. The UT accomplishments over the last nine years are staggering. I will

highlight some of them in the next paragraph as they relate to the desired initiatives and priorities of the next Snow College President as outlined in the presidential leadership profile.

We have created and implemented two strategic plans that have shaped the future of UT. The plans were created with engagement from the campus community, the community at large, and all major stake holders. I managed the hugely successful implementation of the 2020 strategic plan. My role in overseeing the entire plan required my leadership and engagement with all the following institutional accomplishments: added dozens of academic programs (including certificates, associates, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees) and launched Utah Tech University online, increased enrollment by 46.5%, increased degrees awarded by 60%, expanded the base budget by 50%, solicited the largest donations in school history, transitioned the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics from Division II to Division I, welcomed the first school rankings by U.S. News and World Report, created the Multicultural Inclusion Center, added many new divisions as well as built a variety of academic and student-centered new facilities, all the while maintaining the lowest university tuition rate in the state. My background and professional capability to lead UT to accomplish its strategic planning goals would lend added value and expertise to Snow College's pursuit of its goals.

My past and current involvement with technical education can be seen in the breadth of our UT involvement. We have developed close partnerships with our regional K-16 partners – including collaborating with Washington County School District on a STEM high school as well as exploring being a State Charter School authorizer. We have a good relationship with Dixie Technical College with whom we closely coordinate and align our technical education, certificates, degrees, and community education programs. UT offers 17 certificates and 11 associate degrees in technical education programs that include: emergency medical services (EMT basic and intermediate), nursing assistant (CNA), marketing, computing fundamentals, pre-engineering, and many more on the St. George main campus as well as at branch campuses including the Hurricane Center. We recently hired a Regional Academic Pathways Coordinator who collaborates with UT, Dixie Tech, the USHE, and K-12 partners to strategically develop, promote, implement, and assess coordinated educational pathways.

My duties include responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Office of the President, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and the Office of Equity & Inclusion. I coordinate the President's Cabinet, Executive Leadership team, and work closely with the Board of Trustees in assisting the President lead an effective senior management team. I represent the President often in meetings to resolve issues involving students, staff, faculty, donors, community members, K-16 partners, policy makers, and other constituencies. I serve as the President's representative on numerous campus committees including the politically sensitive space and facilities committee. The President has asked me to chair the search for cabinet member positions on six separate occasions as well as lead the transition process for our Department of Intercollegiate Athletics where I serve as the Chair of the Self-Study Committee. Some common themes in our campus leadership efforts include placing an importance on teamwork, effective and timely communication, transparency, a commitment to excellence and integrity in everything we do, employee and student mental health and well-being, and data driven decision-making.

In my role, I work closely with faculty and staff across campus and have had an excellent relationship with each of the Faculty Senate Presidents with whom I have served during my tenure at UT. Shared governance is a central focus of our leadership philosophy. For the past five years, President Williams and I have hosted listening lunches with a couple dozen different faculty and staff on a monthly basis to hear directly from them about what challenges, questions, and suggested solutions they have on any topic they would like to discuss. It has been a tremendous opportunity to get to know and problem-solve together with wonderful committed institutional partners. As Secretary to the UT Board of Trustees, I manage Board member relations, meetings, agendas, training, onboarding, and open meeting compliance. This direct and daily involvement and exposure

to college administration and engagement would serve me well if selected as President of Snow College.

I have noteworthy experience in the distance education arena. Several years ago, I was approached by the Director of Southern Utah University's (SUU) Masters of Public Administration program to develop and teach an online course in higher education law and policy. I created and regularly teach the course in Canvas. I will be teaching it again this summer. This personal experience has provided me greater understanding and appreciation for online instruction and the benefits it can provide to students from diverse and varied backgrounds and different stages of their professional careers (highlighted during the COVID-19 environment).

Previously, I worked as the Assistant Commissioner for Policy & Planning at the USHE. A significant portion of my job was to manage and coordinate the college and university presidential searches and performance evaluations for the Board of Higher Education. Additional responsibilities at the USHE included coordinating and assisting with the strategic planning function of the Board and the Commissioner's office, coordinating orientation for new Board Members and Trustees, managing the maintenance and development of all Board policies, reviewing and providing feedback and advice to the Commissioner on proposed legislation and corresponding fiscal notes. My familiarity with USHE processes and relationships within the System would serve Snow College well.

My position prior to working at the USHE was the Director of State Relations at the University of Oregon (UO). I directed campus legislative efforts and accompanied the President on frequent visits with legislators, media, state higher education board members, and other policymakers. I strategically managed the use of the President and other university leadership, including the UO Foundation Board, in advancing UO legislative priorities and fundraising. I coordinated the university's representation to the State Board of Higher Education. College presidential positions are innately political. A person who is fortunate enough to be able to advocate on behalf of his or her alma mater benefits from a certain authenticity because the message is rooted in first-hand experience. I profited from this messaging advantage while at the UO and, as a proud alumnus, would be able to do that at Snow as well.

I have considerable expertise with building community partnerships. One of the major initiatives I worked on at the UO was to move the governance structure of the university from a state-based board model to an institutional board model. This was a comprehensive effort that involved local community members, alumni at the local and national level, local and state political leaders, the business community, and other state higher education partners. It was a herculean project that was led by an inspirational President. It was not without stops and starts, but in the end, a local board model was adopted. The institutional board model works for Oregon now, but going through the board transformational process provided me greater appreciation for the importance and function of a state governing board working closely with institutional boards, as is the case in Utah. Snow College benefits tremendously from the support, proficiency, and leadership of both the Utah Board of Higher Education and its Board of Trustees. I would be a strong advocate for the continuation of this model and be able to speak authoritatively to my experience in other states.

Before my employment at the UO, I worked as the Director of Policy, Negotiations, & Legislative Services at the Utah Education Association (UEA). In this position I made it a priority to work collaboratively with educators and K-16 partners. As a member of the UEA Executive Director's Cabinet, I participated in the annual review and revision of the organization's strategic master plan and worked throughout the year to see that the plan was successfully implemented. I provided training and professional development to the UEA Board of Directors and other leadership. I wrote, secured, and worked to implement a grant for UEA's retired member program. I lobbied locally elected officials, state legislators, the Governor, and members of Congress advocating for additional funding for students and educators. My emphasis was on school finance and sharing with private and public sector partners the positive economic impact that investing in K-12 education provides the State and local communities. My decade of external relations and lobbying expertise in K-12, at

the UO, and with the USHE provides an important toolkit for the President's responsibility to raise funds for Snow College with private and public partners. It has been said that fundraising is not about the individual who requests the financial support, nor the organization that would benefit from the support, but rather what the organization (Snow College) can do to improve the world, in partnership with a donor. Nurturing relationships, building authentic narratives for reasons to partner, and individualized approaches to resource cultivation are particular strengths of mine.

My educational preparation includes a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from the University of Oregon School of Law where I emphasized education and business law. During my last two years in law school, I was employed as the assistant to the deputy chancellor/general counsel of the Oregon University System (OUS). Prior to enrolling in law school, I worked at the USHE in the budget, finance, and capital facilities division for three years. While working at the USHE, I earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Utah with an emphasis in educational administration, higher education finance, and budgeting.

My experience working at UT, the UO, three different higher education system offices, each governed by a Board of exceptional community members and professionals, and in K-12 education, has taught me the importance of bold leadership to help ensure accomplishment of the institutional mission and strategic plan. I also learned the value of providing educational opportunities for students from all backgrounds and circumstances. My diverse professional background and participation in resolving challenging issues has provided me extensive involvement in entrepreneurial leadership and attacking challenges both from inside and outside the organization with creativity and a positive, solutions-oriented approach.

Snow College has benefitted from the leadership of great presidents. I have personally known and admired each president dating back to Steve Bennion, who hired my father as Vice President for Academic Affairs in 1986. President Day performed the wedding ceremony for Janalyn and me in Manti in 1995! Snow has excellent Trustees, a strong administrative team including interim President Stacey McIlff, committed faculty and staff, wonderful students, and a supportive community. It is well positioned and ready to take the next step as a premiere college. My graduate studies and professional work in K-16 education, strategic planning, policy, finance, government relations, and law, plus engagement at the K-12 and higher education cabinet level, have provided me with the background and experience to enable me to lead Snow College forward with continued success as the next President.

Finally, a major reason I am applying for this position, and my credo if selected, can best be summed up by an excerpt from an e-mail I received from a dear friend, Neal Cox, long-time Snow College Vice President of Student Life and Sanpete son, at the conclusion of the 2019 Snow College presidential search about our joint life pursuits of working in higher education. He wrote, "You will find much fulfillment in your work as you increasingly realize the way you have been able to **help young people prepare for lives of meaningful service and positive employment opportunities**. I am thankful for my years as an educator and grateful for the many good students, yourself included, with whom I was able to labor." I desire to do nothing more than exactly that for Snow College students...

Thank you for this opportunity to apply for the position of President. I have attached a curriculum vitae for your review. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or if I can provide additional information. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Courtney R. White
Attachment