

April 10, 2024

Search Committee  
School of Nursing and Health Studies  
University of Washington

Greetings Search Committee Members,

It is my honor to apply for the position of Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Studies (SNHS) at the University Washington Bothell (UW Bothell). I am confident that my progressive leadership experience has prepared me to provide innovative and visionary leadership in this important position. I currently serve as the Interim Dean for the College of Health Sciences and Human Services (CHSHS) at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB). Concurrent to this role, I hold the position of Professor of Public Administration and Nonprofit Management with a focus on community health.

My interest in this opportunity stems from UW Bothell's strong reputation for student success, community engagement, and working collaboratively to address community-based problems. Each of these areas is in direct alignment with my professional experience in delivering high-quality educational services, which include curricular and co-curricular experiences, outcome-based learning, leadership development activities, and high impact practices. As a dedicated healthcare professional, I believe my talents are well-suited to the demands of this position and that my leadership skills would lend themselves well to the important work associated with the position.

I am a first-generation college graduate and a US Army veteran who understands the power and value of education, which significantly contributes to the ways in which I navigate the world and higher education. I have held numerous leadership and management positions and believe that my unique skill set is an ideal match to lead the SNHS into the future by supporting faculty and staff success, developing innovative programs and services, and expanding access and opportunities for increasingly diverse and complex student populations.

Below, I elaborate on how my experience and expertise will fulfill the expectations associated with this position. I thank you in advance for your review and consideration.

### **School Leadership and Mission Alignment**

After reviewing the school's mission and vision, I believe my career is in direct alignment with the central thrust of the school. Centered on health equity and well-being, I have spent nearly three decades addressing critical health needs in communities across the U.S. I value transdisciplinary education that leverages the power of individual and collaborative disciplines that grow synergy and alignment from proximity and partnerships. I am deeply committed to student success and lifelong learning coupled with a deep resolve to create access and opportunities for a diverse array of learners.

Throughout my career, I have been responsible for managing budgets and developing diverse portfolios. I currently oversee an annual budget of \$3.8 million and have managed operational budgets for other organizations that have exceeded that amount. I have had success in securing funding from individual donors, grants, and capital campaigns. One recent example of my ability to secure funding for my work was the launch of the African Heritage Research Collaborative, a research lab dedicated to examining health disparities and social inequalities experienced by African Americans. Since launching the lab in 2018, we have supported over 50 students across various disciplines. Each of our students have been

successful in graduating in a timely manner and a large number of them have continued their educational journeys in graduate school. My lab has been successful in securing grants totaling \$860,125 to support our work and provide student scholarships. Based on the innovative programming currently underway at SNHS, this is just one example of how I would bring my experience in fundraising and developing collaborative partnerships to this position.

In my current role, I am responsible for ensuring the college is in alignment with the university's strategic plan. Over the past several months, I created a strong team of campus personnel to lead the establishment of a School of Nursing. This growth of the nursing profession is dedicated to meeting the regional need for nurses and includes a Master in Nursing, pre-licensure Bachelor of Nursing, and Nurse Practitioner degrees. To support this project, I am working to secure funds for a new health science building, several endowed positions, and a vast array of technology and clinical equipment.

Throughout my career in higher education, I have worked to ensure students were successful inside and outside of the classroom. I am a well-respected faculty member in the California University State (CSU) system, having recently received the Faculty of the Year award from the California State Student Association—during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic—for my leadership and advocacy in keeping our campus and broader communities safe. I was also recognized by the CSUMB Academic Senate for my dedication and commitment to student success as the recipient of the Joe Larkin Service Award (Immediate Impact). I have a history of working directly with students and with my colleagues to foster a culture of care by focusing on the whole student. One clear example of this has been my support for Exercise is Medicine, a student-led group in the Kinesiology Department that serves as a health and wellness group for the entire campus. My avid support for this and other student-led groups is exemplified by my ability to provide resources, garner faculty support, and engage the broader community in an effort to further their success.

My ability to reach and influence broad audiences is influenced by leadership experiences gained at the national, state, and local level. As a nonprofit executive and higher education professional, I have vast experience in leading and participating in strategic planning and management processes. I served as an integral member of the CSUMB Strategic Planning Committee (2019-2024 Strategic Plan) and was recently invited to participate on the current strategic planning committee representing Academic Affairs. For more than two decades, I have provided strategic planning services for numerous non-profit organizations and government agencies. I have experience using data and metrics in annual evaluation and assessment processes. Most recently, I worked with a small team to develop material and present campus strategies for our re-accreditation site visit for the Western Association of Senior Colleges and Universities (WASCUC).

It is my belief that students thrive best in environments where they feel welcome, included and valued. To that end, I have a deep commitment to serving a diverse range of students with a keen interest in closing equity gaps. I have a sustained track record of collaborating with faculty from other institutions and disciplines on the development of teaching and learning materials and activities as well as the thoughtful integration of reflective practices and outcomes-based learning into course design. I am honored to have the support of countless students who appreciate my desire to support their academic and professional success. I am passionate about my ability to effectively mentor diverse students as it is a critical step in my efforts to create the change we desire to see in the world.

### **Campus Collaboration and Coordination**

My body of work is undergirded by my desire to motivate, inspire, and lead students to grow their capacity to become social change leaders in working towards a just and liberated world. The work I do in advancing health equity can be seen in the way in which I mentor faculty and students, collaborate with others in the development of teaching and learning activities, lead departments, manage the school,

integrate high impact practices, and develop experiential and co-curricular activities to enhance the learning experiences of students. In my current role, I support nearly 1,000 students across three undergraduate and two graduate departments. A key function of my position is fostering an environment where students can succeed. This translates into ensuring resources are available to support their professional and personal growth and developing opportunities to enhance their learning experiences.

I consider myself a fair and transparent leader, who thrives in challenging, complex environments. I have a strong background in personnel management with experience in a unionized environment. Faculty represent one of a university's most valuable resources, as they are called upon to carry out the mission of delivering education to our students. My ability to develop deep and caring relationships with a broad array of faculty is an invaluable asset to my ability to shape policy and practice. At CSUMB, I have been successful in supporting faculty across the life-cycle (hiring, promotion, retention, awards, retirement, emeriti status). I have a successful track record of mentoring junior faculty and supporting faculty to achieve tenure and promotion. I started the tenure track support co-operative (discussion group) as a collaborative resource for junior faculty to enhance their sense of belonging and increase their ability to achieve tenure and promotion. I am excited to see this effort continue to grow and thrive under new leadership with nearly all participants earning tenure and promotion while growing confidence and engagement with the broader campus community.

### **Shared Governance**

Throughout my career, I have been a staunch supporter and advocate for students, faculty, and staff success. My efforts include working collaboratively to foster enrollment growth and reduce time to degree. I have developed program improvement plans that focus on outcome-based learning, developed proposals to reduce and enhance major learning outcomes, and integrated strategic growth plans into operational plans to support student success and reduce time to degree completion.

I am an innovative thought-leader who is fully capable of leveraging the power of technological advances. I believe education should be accessible to students with diverse abilities, preferences, and needs. I stay abreast with changes in the field, technology, and higher education by attending conferences and other training opportunities. I have a long history of supporting academic excellence and professional development, including faculty and staff development. I have consistently demonstrated my commitment to mentoring and supporting faculty growth and have worked to support them in their ability to excel in the work they do in supporting students, succeeding in their careers, and building a positive campus community.

### **External Relations**

I have represented the college in numerous forums and over a sustained period. At the national level, I served on the planning committee for the National Conference on Health Disparities Student Research Forum. In this role, I supported students to develop posters for a national competition, judged the poster competition, provided a keynote presentation during the conference to a broad audience of constituents, and facilitated student workshops to increase their ability to secure grants and support for research activities. I serve as a member of CSU Health and Human Services Deans where we collaborate on statewide issues, including addressing the increasing demand for registered nurses and strategic partnerships with the California Community Colleges and the University of California.

I am deeply engaged in numerous community-based projects that demonstrate my commitment to ensuring our community members live longer, happier, and healthy lives. I recently held elected leadership positions in the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) and the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter of ASPA. On the local level, I am the Board Chair of the Monterey County Rape Crisis Center and a founding advisory board member of Jerry's Place (a newly established social model

hospice). The experiences I have gained from these activities will undoubtedly allow me to build onto UWB's stellar reputation.

### **Scholarly and Professional Engagement**

I am a well-regarded health equity scholar who is committed to improving health and health outcomes for vulnerable populations. Most recently, I have started a project focused on creating access to health services for aging populations. This work is timely as technological innovations have created new ways to interact and engage with direct implications for increasing access to a variety of healthcare services for aging populations in urban and rural settings.

### **Summary**

My entire career has been built around service at increasing levels of responsibility. In considering my future career trajectory, I am looking forward to new challenges that will afford me to fully demonstrate my skills and abilities as a higher education professional. My commitment to advancing educational opportunities is rooted in my deep connection to students who view education as an opportunity for upward mobility. Having the chance to support SNHS to advance its mission is an ideal position for me as it advances me along a trajectory of serving as a deeply committed and socially conscious senior level administrator.

In sum, my strong leadership background, dedication to student success, and years of professional experience, contribute to my preparedness and readiness to serve as Dean of SNHS. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Vanessa Lopez-Littleton*

Vanessa Lopez-Littleton, PhD, RN