

September 12, 2021

Dear Chairman Hulse and the Presidential Search Committee for the Wayne Community College:

I submit this letter and the attached materials as my application for the **President** of the Wayne Community College. For over twenty-six years, I've worked in higher education in the states of Georgia and Louisiana. For the past five years, I've served as Chancellor of Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA), the only Historically Black College and University (HBCU) community college in Louisiana. Prior to this leadership opportunity, I served two and half years as Chancellor of Central Louisiana Technical Community College (CLTCC) in Alexandria, Louisiana. During my time as Chancellor at SUSLA and CLTCC, I led efforts to secure over \$10 million in federal, state and local grant funding as well as over \$2,000,000 in private funding to start new and upgrade existing programs. I also restructured and rebranded CLTCC's 7-campus organization, reduced budget deficits by \$1.2 million, expanded student activities and program offerings, secured \$19 million from the state legislature for a new building, secured \$5.3 million in non-state funding for this new building, completed construction and major renovations to three other buildings, achieved reaffirmation from the accrediting bodies governing these institutions, increased the public's awareness and image of these colleges, and developed new 5-year strategic plans for both SUSLA and CLTCC. In addition, my national relationship building resulted in a 2018 appointment to *The White House Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)*, a 2019 appointment as *Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army (CASA) for North Louisiana*, and most recently (2021), an appointment as a *NJCAA Regional Ambassador for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*. Information below specifically addresses some of my qualifications:

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER, COLLABORATOR, AND COMMUNITY BUILDER:

I am an experienced education leader with over twenty-six (26) years of experience in higher education and twenty-one (21) years of this as a senior level college administrator. I have led institutions in the development of strategic and operational plans. I have actively developed three (3) strategic plans at Atlanta Technical College as the leader of the division and/or department responsible for strategic and operational plan development, assessment and revision, one (1) at Central Louisiana Technical Community College as the leader of the institution, and one (1) at Southern University at Shreveport as Chancellor.

EFFECTIVE ACADEMIC PROGRAM LEADERSHIP, DEVELOPMENT & ASSESSMENT:

I have twenty-five (25) years of academic experience. *All these years include leading faculty and staff in the evaluation of programs and instruction, development of strategies to improve student learning outcomes, revision of curriculum, development of new programs, and delivery of innovative professional development on instructional delivery methods and learning styles.* Accomplishments in academic affairs include co-leading the feasibility study for a new associate degree nursing program and starting several new programs such as Biotechnology, Logistics/Supply-Chain Management, Commercial Truck Driving (CDL), Health Information Technology, Pharmacy Technology, Advanced Manufacturing and Paramedic Technology. Finally, I led the development and accreditation (substantive change) efforts for an International Program focused on English Emergence as the first phase of a 4-year plan to develop programs in Business, Technology and Health at King Faisal University in Saudi Arabia.

PROVEN LEADER WITH ASTUTE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

I have over twenty-one (21) years of budget development and management experience. I've managed budgets ranging from \$10 million to \$40 million annually. As Chancellor of Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA), I've led efforts to increase cash reserves, reduce accounts receivables, expand revenue options, and lower expenditures. *The results of this have been a debt reduction of over \$5 million over the past five years, and the elimination of SUSLA from the Louisiana Board of Regents fiscal watch list because of a better fiscal ratio.* As Chancellor of Central Louisiana Technical Community College (CLTCC), I reduced the debt by \$1.2 million in my first two years. As Executive Vice President at Atlanta Technical College, I led initiatives to increase revenue for the college such as establishing international training contracts and acquiring off-campus facilities.

CULTIVATOR OF DIVERSIFIED INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES:

I have over twenty-six (26) years of experience with **fundraising** and resource development. I led the Atlanta Technical College Foundation as its Executive Director for twelve (12) years, directly supervising and leading the college's advancement/fundraising efforts. In this role, I led the establishment the foundation. As Chancellor, I have been the Chief Fundraiser for the colleges/universities I've led. *Through all of these experiences, I've secured nearly \$50 million in federal grant funding and nearly \$20 million in private sector/non-state funding and resources to support programs and services.*

INFLUENCER IN COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE GROWTH:

In 2008, I became a Certified Economic Developer Trainer (CEDT). Also, as the Chancellor of Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA), *I serve on the Board of Directors for the North Louisiana Economic Development Partnership and*

actively engage with the Committee of 100, Strategic Action Council, and Shreveport and Bossier City area Chambers of Commerce. As Chancellor of Southern University at Shreveport (SUSLA) and Central Louisiana Technical Community College (CLTCC) and Provost/Executive Vice President of Atlanta Technical College (ATC), I expanded dual enrollment partnerships with local secondary schools. In conjunction with the Fulton County Public Schools, I co-led efforts to establish the Hapeville High School Career Academy where ATC offered workforce programs such as Dental Assisting, Aviation, and Nursing.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS:

Because of my childhood upbringing and growth as an adult, diversity and inclusion are embedded in my personal core values as well as my professional core values. Thus, my educational philosophy is one that embraces diversity and believes that the delivery and acquisition of knowledge can only be enhanced by diversity. Because of this, one of the key initiatives implemented at Atlanta Technical College was the establishment of a Human Relations Committee. A key purpose of this committee was to implement strategies to establish and build a positive organizational culture and employee morale, including initiatives to promote and appreciate diversity in its many forms.

CHAMPION OF STUDENT AND CLIENT SUCCESS:

As a strong student advocate, I have led the implementation of several initiatives to improve student success. At SUSLA we have begun an effort to insure student persistence through curriculum redesign, Guided Pathways, the 15-to-Finish initiative, Student Success Coaches and other efforts. *Over the past 3 years, this has resulted in nearly a 10% increase in the retention rate.* At CLTCC, I advocated for the expansion of student activities and greater opportunities for student engagement. At Atlanta Technical College (ATC), I initiated and led efforts to become an Achieving the Dream (ATD) institution, and implemented strategies consistent with proven initiatives of ATD and Complete College America.

ACCREDITATION EXPERIENCE:

I have twenty-six (26) years of experience leading and supporting accreditation efforts. At Atlanta Technical College, I led the application, candidacy, initial accreditation, and subsequent reaffirmations with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). At Central Louisiana Technical Community College and Atlanta Technical College, I led reaffirmations with the Council on Occupational Education (COE). As a Higher Education Consultant, I advised institutions and led their reaffirmation efforts. This resulted in successful SACSCOC 5th Year Interim and Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Impact Reports. Finally, as leader of Southern University at Shreveport, I've also supported and led successful SACSCOC 5th Year Interim and Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Impact Reports.

AN UNDERSTANDING OF TRENDS AND ISSUES AFFECTING HIGHER EDUCATION:

As mentioned, I've previously served as a guest lecturer for Western Carolina University and currently serve in that capacity at the University of Maryland University College. I teach a class on State Systems in Higher Education and Community College Advocacy, respectively. This delivery of instruction keeps me abreast of current trends and issues affecting higher education. I also participate annually in the conferences provided by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

If hired as the next *President* of the **Wayne Community College (WCC)**, I will bring a strong commitment to the mission of community colleges and the 21st Century college. I am intrigued about utilizing my 21 years of senior-level higher education experience to lead such a diverse student body and campus over the next decade. WCC has programs like Aviation System Technology, Truck Driving and Nursing with which I am familiar. Seymour Johnson Air Force Base provides an opportunity for WCC to seek the status of a Military Friendly Institution as I've done at SUSLA and utilize my status as a Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army to strengthen this relationship. A product of a small town, Tuskegee, Alabama, I am extremely excited about the possibility of moving to Wayne County. It is an area that offers the tranquility of a small town, rich in culture and history, but the access to several amenities less than an hour away in Raleigh and neighboring towns. From the African American Music Trail to the Cliffs of the Neuse State Park and the Historic District's Barriquer restaurant, it is a place that I know I would thoroughly enjoy living. I am energetic, loyal and honest. I am positive, action-orientation, approachable, decisive, and open to ideas other than my own. I am a servant-leader who believes in motivating others to achieve more than they thought they could, empowering them to get it done, and getting into the trenches with them whenever it is necessary.

Sincerely,



Rodney A. Ellis, Ed.D.