

15 September 2021

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

Please accept my application for the position of *President* at Wayne Community College. I think you will find that my record of service and innovation in higher education make me an ideal candidate. I will complete my fourth year as the Vice President of Academics at Lincoln Land Community College this December. I taught for eighteen years at a community college and have twenty-eight years of experience in higher education.

Collaboration with College & Community Stakeholders: My current institution has a service area of 4,000 square miles with multiple locations. Springfield, the state capital, has a largely urban population; other locations are smaller and focused on agriculture and specialized industries. They each have distinct characters and histories, and I have enjoyed navigating the local political waters to help me serve these communities.

At Lincoln Land, I have directed new partnership agreements (including guided pathways) with many local universities and pipeline programs with local high schools in workforce areas and in teacher education. I am working with local industry to expand our truckdriver training program and begin a new program in heavy diesel. In the past, I developed programing for the NY State prison system and also for active-duty military in Iraq.

I am proud to represent my institution in the community, and my references will confirm that I am an effective advocate of my institution. I attend as many college events as I can manage—and I am glad that most on campus recognize and greet me by name. I have always been active in public service. I have had close relationships with state and local governmental representatives; additionally, I have served on various local boards. Community colleges play various important roles: we serve as the onramp to continuing higher education for some, the driver of economic growth to others, the place for short-term training or exposure to the arts for still others. Though we cannot be all things to all people, we can do our best to be as much as we can to as many as possible.

Support to Faculty, Student Success & Academic Excellence: As a former tenured faculty member, I have a long record of service to students and of partnerships with faculty and staff. I am committed to shared governance and have participated in it as an administrator, faculty member, and union leader. I am also dedicated to academic freedom and value working with faculty, both individually and departmentally, to ensure that these principles are used to foster academic excellence.

Exploring and supporting innovation in support of student success has been a hallmark of my career. Most recently, I led Lincoln Land to become the first community college in the state to embrace a multiple measures approach to placement in English & mathematics as opposed to placement tests, lowering time to graduation and increasing student success rates. At Richard Bland, I was named one of thirty Digital Fellows nationwide who participated in a year-long research program sponsored by the Gates Foundation.

Leadership Qualities: I am proud to say that my colleagues have always liked working with me; I once did not get a vice presidency at a college in Massachusetts because I was “too friendly.” I have found that treating people with respect and genuine concern tends to repay with interest. I also know that leaders must make difficult decisions, and when I have had to close programs, terminate staff, or make other hard choices, I have always done so with fairness and tact. In line with my fiduciary duty to taxpayers, I collaborate with campus leaders to develop responsible budgets and to supplement them with outside funds.

I am comfortable working with complex and involved policies and procedures in support of institutional and systemic strategic plans. I am aware of the challenges facing higher education today (most importantly, funding, enrollment management, and college completion). Assessment, accreditation, and innovation are particular areas of strength.

Promoting a Culture of Diversity & Inclusion: As a first-generation college graduate myself, I am committed to institutions that focus on serving a diversity of students. Indeed, the students at all of my prior institutions have been highly diverse in terms of race, socioeconomics, academics, disabled status, and gender/sexuality. I have also worked to recruit a diverse faculty and staff at each of my prior institutions as I firmly believe it is important for public institutions to reflect their society. I have had good success recruiting and retaining a diverse group of colleagues. Though it can be challenging to attract and retain faculty and staff, especially at rural colleges, I have found that building community and ensuring that people feel genuinely supported goes a long way.

How WCC Intrigues me: I had the distinct pleasure of visiting WCC as one of your SACSCOC reviewers five years ago. I found the campus to be lovely, the people to be forthright and friendly, and the institution to be a well-run and welcoming community. I little thought then that I might have the chance to join WCC, but now the opportunity to lead an institution I was so thoroughly introduced to seems ideal. (In fact, I did not intend to look for a presidency this year—this is the only one to which I will be applying.)

Moving to Wayne County: I remember fondly the ambiance of downtown Goldsboro and the excellent hospitality we received at the local restaurants we went to—and it appears that the downtown has only improved since my last visit. I also appreciate a small-town location within easy access to a larger city. On a personal note, my son lives just north in Richmond, and this move would put my wife and myself within a day’s drive of my daughter as well. I also look forward to moving to a state that has trout fishing and mountains within driving distance.

Thank you for your consideration, and my sincere best wishes to WCC in its search.

Sincerely yours,

Vern L. Lindquist, Ph.D.
Vice President, Academics, Lincoln Land CC