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November 9, 2006

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Sent via e-mail to jba@academic-search.com and ohchan@academic-search.com

Dear Dr. Appleberry:

I am pleased to have been nominated for the position of Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents and submit this letter and its accompanying materials as my application for the position. I believe that my knowledge of higher education and the skills I've developed as the head of Nebraska's higher education Commission and, earlier, working at the state level in one of the nation's largest and most complex higher education systems (Texas) could benefit Ohio's Board, the state's institutions, and the students and citizens they together serve.

A quick review of *Measuring Up 2006: The State Report Card on Higher Education* indicates that Ohio, like most states, continues to face challenges in maintaining or raising its levels of educational attainment, household income, and other quality of life measures for its citizens. While national support for addressing those issues is important, sustainable and empowering approaches come from within – from the creativity, capability, and productivity of people in the state. Those qualities can best be developed and enhanced through education, with cooperation between strong public schools, the business community, and a responsive, efficient, coordinated, and fully-developed higher education system. Maine is doing better than many states, but it is hard to see how its future needs can be met without continued improvement in several areas.

Making improvements requires strong leadership, including the ability to generate good ideas, build consensus for them, and develop reliable systems for implementing, evaluating, and adjusting if necessary. I have a history of success in those tasks, and I trust that the information I've included here and the comments of people I've listed as references will support that.

With increasing responsibilities, I have worked for more than 12 years in two statewide systems of public higher education: Nebraska – a fairly small system in a mostly rural state, and Texas – a complex system in a state large enough to have just about every problem and opportunity facing American higher education. I know the “levers and pulleys” of statewide higher education work – knowledge difficult to gain from an institutional perspective – and I have worked with two

statewide boards to better focus efforts on broad issues such as access, affordability, student success, and accountability. On many important issues I have developed policies and options, clearly explained their pros and cons, advocated beneficial approaches, and generated support across different constituencies for the steps necessary to deal with important statewide concerns.

I was a full-time faculty member for 17 years, working in several types of institutions, serving on every type of committee, and earning tenure at a research institution. That experience has aided my work here and in Texas and would likely yield benefits in Ohio, as well. It's made it far easier to understand various perspectives and work with people who might otherwise assume I couldn't understand their point of view because I "hadn't been there."

Current Position and Responsibilities

As Executive Director of Nebraska's Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education I head the agency responsible for statewide higher education planning, approval of academic programs and construction projects, administration of student loan programs, and review and recommendations to the Legislature on institutional budget requests. We also produce numerous reports and analyses of higher education issues. Nebraska's public higher education system includes four campuses of the University of Nebraska (including one academic health science center), three state colleges, and six community colleges. Those institutions together enroll about 95,000 students and are supported by about \$550 million/year in state appropriations.

Prior to my work in Nebraska, I was Assistant Commissioner for Universities and Health-Related Institutions at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. There I dealt most directly with Texas' 35 public universities and nine health science centers, a large and diverse group enrolling almost 500,000 students within a total higher ed enrollment of about 1.2 million. I also gained a good understanding of community and technical colleges and had some success in facilitating the transfer of their students into baccalaureate programs. In both Nebraska and Texas I have had excellent relationships with the independent higher education sector. In both states, but particularly in Nebraska, I have had close and supportive working relationships with colleagues in state K-12 leadership positions.

I have numerous contacts and friendships in the various regional and national organizations important to the work of state-level boards and am frequently invited to participate in projects those organizations undertake. That involvement has allowed Nebraska, and previously Texas, to have a voice on many issues of regional and national importance, and it illustrates a commitment and national visibility that I would continue if I moved to Ohio.

Leadership, Communication, and Advocacy

I offer strong, successful experience as a leader and consensus builder, and my work has provided the opportunity to demonstrate those skills statewide in complex, high-stakes, potentially contentious, and highly political environments. I generally attribute my successful resolution of difficult issues to persuasion, a reputation for fairness, and superb staff work, rather than the application of power or rule. I have close working relationships with presidents, provosts, deans, and faculty, dealing with problems and issues that arise and working pro-actively to develop policies that can gain broad support. I enjoy superb relationships with institutional colleagues, relationships that have survived many challenging tasks and the frequent need to say “no.”

I work directly with legislative and executive branch issues and individuals and frequently represent our Commission in testimony before legislative committees. In Nebraska, my staff and I develop many recommendations on issues of concern to the Legislature. For six years, my Texas staff and I developed most of the analyses and recommendations approved by our Board on dozens of major pieces of proposed legislation affecting higher education, and I testified before legislative committees many times. I therefore understand and have significant direct experience with the political and procedural processes of state government.

I make frequent presentations to external audiences on a wide range of issues, have dealt successfully with several thorny personnel problems and the “re-building” of two of the Texas Coordinating Board’s divisions, and work effectively with board and commission members, institutional representatives, and legislators having diverging views. I am accustomed to developing positions and successfully advocating them to diverse groups. As Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents, I would employ those skills to help broaden support for higher education in Ohio among members of the legislature, the executive branch, faculty, students, and the general public.

Financial and Planning Skills

My work requires strong funding and budgeting skills at statewide, agency, and institutional levels. As mentioned above, the Nebraska Commission reviews all public institutions’ budget requests and makes modifications and recommendations on them to the legislature. We also administer the state’s student financial aid program, totaling about \$10 million. I participated in the revision of Texas’ system of formulas for funding its public universities and the development of a similar system for the state’s health-related institutions. In Texas I controlled multiple agency operating budgets and was responsible for allocating about \$14 million/year to support graduate medical education and

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health-related research. (State budget shortfalls reduced those funds from a prior level of approximately \$32 million/year. Programmatic expenditures were reduced, along with operating expenses, so I have some direct, painful experience in dealing with financial constraints.) I also administered about \$3.5 million/year to support educator preparation programs at Texas' four, independent, historically Black colleges. In Texas, my staff and I dealt with many hundreds of proposed degree programs, in all disciplines, with costs totaling hundreds of millions of dollars. I believe our level of activity in that area was unmatched anywhere.

I have been closely involved with several major planning projects. The Nebraska Commission maintains a Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education, with periodic review and modification. In Texas, our Board developed a new "master" plan for all of Texas public higher education (*Closing the Gaps*). This was a major and continuing project, involving needs assessment, the identification of major goals, the creation of strategies for reaching those goals, the refinement and implementation of evaluation and assessment procedures, and, most importantly, the development of broad support among affected and interested parties. (In short, Texas needs to "close gaps" in four areas: Participation, Success, Excellence and Research.) For Texas – a rapidly growing state – accomplishing the goals of the plan is crucial to the future well-being and prosperity of the state and its people. Through that and other work, I have a clear understanding of the important and mutual support that higher education, the K-12 sector, and the business community can and must offer one another. Nebraska, Texas, and Ohio face different challenges, but developing and implementing ways to address them are similar tasks.

Knowledge of and Experience with Higher Education Issues

I work on a daily basis with many issues at the forefront of the national higher education agenda: increasing access and stimulating diversity; encouraging larger numbers of students to attend (and be *ready* to attend) college; enhancing the preparation (and increasing the numbers) of educators for primary and secondary schools; facilitating student progress through the educational system; assimilating technology and offering high-quality distance education; promoting basic and applied research; increasing the economic development benefits of higher education (particularly in high tech areas); and providing responsible accountability.

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My Interest in the Ohio Board of Regents

Higher education today faces numerous challenges: changing student populations need flexible opportunities and support to achieve success; faculty need sufficient resources and the intellectual and professional climate in which they can do their best work; and administrators, governing boards, and state government leaders need to ensure accountability. For the foreseeable future, most states will have to meet those challenges with decreasing percentage reliance on direct state funds. My skills and experience have equipped me to play a significant role in meeting those challenges, and, in addition to 17 years' experience as a full-time faculty member in several types of institutions, I can bring to bear the breadth, depth, and volume of experience and judgment gained from more than a dozen years' work addressing them at the state level. In my current and prior work I have shown that I can rouse latent capabilities, focus energies through setting a common agenda, make and generate support for tough choices, and motivate people to want to get important things done. I enjoy working with multiple campuses, fully understand the appropriate division of responsibilities between system and institutional leadership, and believe that state-level leadership and coordination is important and increasingly necessary work.

I would look forward to visiting with the search committee and/or the Board, listening well, and, if a good "match" becomes apparent, working closely with the Board, the governor and Legislature, campus presidents, faculty, students, alumni, administration and staff, and the people of Ohio to advance education and bring about better lives.

I have enclosed contact information for individuals who could speak to my qualifications and suitability for the position. Please let me know if there is additional information you or the Board would find helpful.

Cordially,

Marshall A. Hill