

August 13, 2024
Dean of the College of Business
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Search Committee

Dear Search Committee:

Please accept my application for the Dean of the College of Business at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Having spent time reviewing your position prospectus and learning more about your university, I submit this letter with confidence in my fit for the position and excitement for the potential this opportunity holds. I believe that my background and the breadth and depth of my administrative and faculty experience have prepared me well for the opportunity to effectively and collaboratively push forward the priorities and serve as the next dean of the College of Business.

I am a tenured professor of finance and hold an earned doctorate from Louisiana Tech University (Class of 2001). My experiences as a professor and administrator span a variety of urban and rural institutions ranging from a small liberal arts university to a doctoral research institution. As such, I have had the opportunity to learn from faculty, staff, and administrators of diverse backgrounds, viewpoints, and philosophies concerning higher education. I have taught courses at undergraduate and graduate levels of higher education; and have demonstrated teaching, research, professional development, and service productivity to earn tenure at the University of St. Thomas-Houston, San Jose State University, and finally at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

My service in various administrative roles has provided rewarding experiences that fit exceptionally well with my passion for higher education and positive impact it has on the lives of learners. In these administrative positions, I have been responsible for leading faculty and staff, managing budgets, providing vision and leadership for the strategic planning process, fostering academic excellence, nurturing community engagement, recruiting, developing, and mentoring excellent faculty, and managing the accreditation processes for both regional, international, and specialized accreditation agencies. Also, I have been responsible for recruiting and retaining traditional and nontraditional students for our academic programs and establishing and maintaining a process of continuous improvement. This process of continuous improvement includes regular curricular revisions in response to findings from assessment data and the development of innovative new academic offerings to meet the rapidly changing needs of today's global workplace.

My administrative experience has been at private and public, regional comprehensive universities where excellence in teaching has been a primary emphasis. However, community engagement, impactful research, and strong graduate programs are also very important. As an academic leader, I have had many opportunities to work collaboratively with senior leaders, fellow administrators, faculty and staff, external and internal stakeholders, and accreditation agencies. I am very comfortable in these areas and have success in each. I have earned a reputation as someone who understands the broader goals and needs of the institution and has often been commended as someone who can work cooperatively to find consensus solutions.

I look forward to the opportunity to work with the Texas A&M University-Commerce constituents to improve the student experience and grow and enhance innovative and relevant academic offerings with the use of technology. I advocate for the judicious use of technology to enhance student learning and enrich the student experience. At my current institution, I aligned the college to deliver high-impact academics by facilitating online and hybrid learning in addition to traditional lecture classes and labs. I have worked with faculty members on the methods of teaching with online, hybrid, and flipped classes. I

have also redesigned and built classrooms from the ground up to enhance collaborative learning among students. The future of higher education belongs to the innovators. Using the unique range of disciplines and programs at Texas A&M University-Commerce and cultivating those disciplines with entrepreneurship, we can develop creative and innovative curricula that will extend and enhance the College of Business well into the 21st century.

Concerning funding, I understand institutional funding. My fund-raising efforts contribute to academic programs, faculty excellence, and student scholarships totaling more than six million dollars. I spent most of my academic and administrative career in Texas. I am familiar with the Texas higher education landscape, opportunities, and challenges. My service on the AACSB International Board of Directors (two “three-year” terms) exposed me to emerging global, national, and domestic trends in higher education. I successfully led the College of Business Administration through initial AACSB accreditation (fall 2017) and accreditation re-affirmation (spring 2023). I am familiar with and have been engaged in SACSCOC accreditation reaffirmation efforts.

My CV details my academic credentials, administrative experience, and specific accomplishments in each position. I also would like to provide the Search Committee with some insight into my leadership philosophy and management style that may not be immediately evident from my CV:

- I believe that a successful academic leader is always a change agent, from department chair up to president. The College of Business Dean must lead the process of continuous improvement that is based on the University’s and the School’s distinctive mission and vision.
- A campus is students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders; it is a team of individuals working together to make a difference in the lives of those we serve. I am a believer in synergy, where the sum of the parts is greater than the whole. Creating a community and building towards a common goal is the best way to organize and measure the best of that community’s energies and skills. My leadership style is completely transparent and built upon mutual trust, respect, and open communication. It is important to share my vision, to listen to differing opinions, and to acknowledge the accomplishments of others. A collaborative environment with open communication and a commitment to transparency empowers individuals to be innovative and entrepreneurial. Every administrative activity mentioned in this letter, from establishing an active academic program at the Dallas site, programmatic development, and academic restructuring to personnel and budget management, reflects my deep commitment to shared governance, collaboration, transparency, and the free exchange of ideas and dialogue.
- I believe that academic leaders serve as positive role models for our students, faculty, and staff. Thus, I place a great emphasis on honesty, transparency, personal integrity, and open communication for myself and all those who report to me. Most people working at successful institutions have the desire and skillsets required to succeed. What they need most from leadership is a strategic vision, freedom to pursue excellence at things they care about, and removal of obstacles. As an academic leader, the process of implementing this approach entails persistence, perseverance, open communication, and transparency. This approach has proven to be effective in my current and previous administrative appointments. At the time of my hire at Texas A&M University-Kingsville College of Business Administration, all department chairs, associate dean and assistant to dean were serving on an interim basis. In addition to faculty and staff hires, filling these vacancies, combined with the leadership approach described here, has yielded a very effective team that is committed to continuous improvement and advancing the mission of the College and Texas A&M University-Kingsville. A vital strategy in filling some of these positions, as well as in looking ahead to meet future needs, has been providing leadership, guidance, and mentorship of internal candidates in support of their chosen career path and aspirations.

- As an academic leader, I have always believed that it is very important to mentor and support new faculty, helping them to navigate the competing demands of teaching, research and service. I have a sincere respect for the members of the faculty in all fields. Faculty are the lifeblood of every University. I remember myself being a freshly minted assistant professor on the tenure track. For that reason, I believe that junior faculty need sincere support and encouragement to be successful, and earn tenure and promotion.
- There is nothing more important than our health, our families, and our friends: work-life balance is critical in creating a healthy, engaged, and happy workplace environment, where faculty and staff enjoy their jobs, and coming to work. Happiness inspires productivity.

Throughout my career, I have been successful in ways that have allowed me to help students and my institution reach their goals. I hope that you can now see that I am a strategic and innovative academic leader with a strong record of success who is ready to lead the Marilyn Davies College of Business to continue its student-centered focus and passion for exceptional education while expanding knowledge through high-impact scholastic endeavors, extending knowledge, contributing to practice, and advancing academics. Successes experienced in my current position have been both significant and rewarding. Now, I seek opportunities to exercise effective leadership in a new role, developing new and innovative ways to support the advancement of knowledge and the success of all students, faculty, and staff.

Thank you for taking the time to review my application. If my qualifications and experiences match with those the Committee is seeking for the next Dean of the College of Business, I would like to continue this conversation with you. The best way to reach me is by phone at [REDACTED] or by email [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Natalya (Natasha) Delcoure, DBA
Dean and Professor of Finance