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**Dear TAMUC Search Committee Members:**

I am thrilled to express my strong interest in the Deanship position at Texas A&M University-Commerce (TAMUC). With a diverse background in regional and metropolitan universities spanning over two decades, I am well-prepared to meet the criteria outlined for this role with steadfast confidence and a proven track record of transformative leadership. I am eager to highlight the key achievements in my career that align seamlessly with the outlined position priorities. The prospect of contributing to the ongoing success of TAMUC and actively participating in the realization of TAMUC's high-impact engagement and strategic initiatives, which I believe I am a perfect fit for, resonates perfectly with my passion, experience, and commitment to fostering academic excellence.

As the Dean of the Haile College of Business at Northern Kentucky University (NKU) and my previous leadership positions at the University of Toledo (UToledo), I have developed the skill set necessary to conceive and implement forward-thinking strategies that reshape educational institutions. With my extensive leadership background, I have gained a profound understanding of the unique culture and potential offered by regional campuses, reaffirming my dedication to promoting student and faculty achievements, fostering inclusivity, engaging with the community, upholding academic excellence, nurturing human capital, and ensuring financial and operational stability.

I lead a college of 3,430+ students and degree programs at the bachelor's and master's levels. I focus on fostering a collaborative, inclusive, and innovative culture among our faculty, staff, and students, instilling them with energy and enthusiasm. Throughout my tenure, I have led various initiatives focused on student and faculty success, attracting and retaining top-tier talent, increasing enrollment, improving retention and graduation rates, strengthening community engagement, ensuring financial stability, and elevating the college's rankings. To achieve these goals, I prioritize collaboration across various intra- and inter-university programs to establish impactful strategic partnerships that open many opportunities for our students and faculty. Specific and enhanced descriptions of outcomes and results under my deanship are in my CV. The following examples showcase how my experience aligns with the opportunities and challenges outlined in the TAMUC's position profile.

***Lead And Advance Academic Vision, Mission, Values, and Strategy***

Drawing from extensive experience in guiding, implementing, refining, and propelling initiatives centered on mission, vision, values, and strategic planning, I offer a skill set pivotal to realizing college goals. My deanship at NKU saw the successful orchestration of a collaborative, college-wide strategic planning effort in 2019-2020. One of my signature practices involves meticulously crafting a compelling, purpose-driven college vision. A vision must transcend words, encapsulate aspirations, inspire action, and unite stakeholders. To achieve this, I engaged faculty, staff, students, and relevant stakeholders in brainstorming sessions, ensuring diverse perspectives were considered. This vision is in harmony with the university's overarching mission and values, firmly rooted in reality, as demonstrated through my service on the NKU Strategic Advisory Group.

My vision and mission creation approach extends beyond writing; I guide stakeholders in embracing the vision and mission, making them rallying points for the college community. This transformative practice has elevated strategic planning and fostered unity, direction, and shared commitment. Haile College's Strategic Plan's resounding success, surpassing targets, attests to the efficacy of this approach in charting a course toward excellence.

### ***Innovative Programs and Collaboration Across Campus***

As the world continues to undergo rapid changes, every business feels the unprecedented impact of economic shifts, resource scarcity, and technological breakthroughs. In higher education, adaptation is imperative to avoid stagnation. Universities must proactively provide inventive programs that equip students to navigate an evolving landscape. My tenure at NKU bears testament to this commitment to innovation.

Under my leadership and with the support of our dedicated leadership team, faculty, and staff, we successfully reimagined and expanded the online MBA program. By strategically aligning it with the strengths of the College of Informatics, the College of Health and Human Services, Chase College of Law, and the Institute of Health Innovation, we achieved a remarkable 107.1% increase in enrollment since fall 2019. Together, we launched the accelerated online Master of Accountancy program, resulting in an impressive 81% enrollment growth within its first two years. Our collective efforts also led to the prestigious STEM designation for our BS in Economics, MBA, and MAcc programs, marking a significant milestone for our institution.

My vision, brought to life by collaborative partnerships across academic domains, successfully established International 1+1 MBA and 2+2 programs, fostering vital relationships with institutions in India and Egypt. Additionally, we worked together to propose an innovative bachelor's degree that integrates Business, Analytics, and Humanities, addressing the multifaceted challenges future leaders will face. I firmly believe that continuous innovation and introducing distinctive programs are essential for enabling our students to excel in a dynamic environment. Our shared commitment to excellence has fostered growth in reputation and enrollment and positioned us as leaders in academic innovation.

### **Advance Student Success**

During my deanship at NKU, there has been significant improvement in major indicators of student success. The Haile College of Business exhibits positive trends, with graduation, retention, and persistence rates consistently increasing to unprecedented levels. College retention has increased by 4.5% to 88.6%, enrollment has surged by 23%, and graduation rates have substantially increased by 7.5%.

To achieve the above results, the college has implemented a strategic allocation of resources to regional high schools, delivering career development services, training educators, introducing a business track at the Young Scholars Academy, and providing immersive experiences at the Haile College of Business. Our Chairs have made significant progress with an Academic, Co-curricular, and Career Mapping project, offering individualized roadmaps for students' journeys from campus entry to post-graduation success. Student advising has been revitalized to include a Director of Business Experience, supported by a generous donor, who collaborated with faculty to elevate experiential learning initiatives. Expansion of accelerated online programs, development of transfer plans, and competency-based courses for non-traditional students showcase the College's commitment to accessibility and diversity.

Additionally, global outreach has been enhanced through direct partnerships with universities in India, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. Haile College of Business's outstanding performance in navigating the most demanding aspects of student success is a source of pride. I am honored to have contributed to this remarkable achievement. I am eager to leverage my expertise to strengthen enrollment and student success at TAMUC.

### ***Budget and Financial Management***

With a professional background as an accountant and formal training as an accounting professor, I have acquired the skills to contribute my financial expertise to both UToledo and NKU. While at UToledo, I served as the faculty representative on the Board of Trustees Audit Committee. As a business school dean and dean's leadership team member, I adeptly handle resource management and establish effective financial oversight as integral to my daily responsibilities. My extensive experience involves overseeing complex economic frameworks, optimizing resources for the benefit of faculty, students, and staff, and efficiently managing financial and non-financial assets.

As an accomplished accounting professor, I have the expertise to handle budgetary matters under different budget models, including RCM/IBB models, conduct comprehensive analyses of financial statements, and pinpoint avenues for enhanced cost efficiency and advancement. The Haile College of Business boasts the most competitive instructional costs within NKU and favorably compares with peer institutions. My approach emphasizes seamless collaboration with university stakeholders, adopting a business partner mindset to facilitate optimal resource allocation. This approach entails well-informed deliberations, decisive actions, and transparent financial reporting. My track record is underscored by successful partnerships with faculty, staff, and university leadership to align financial resources with strategic imperatives.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many regional universities faced financial challenges from dwindling enrollment and a decline in interest in higher education. Despite the Haile College of Business experiencing growth over the past four years (5.5% in fall 2024). Lessons drawn from the Haile College situation underscore several vital strategies: prioritizing profit margins by analyzing program profitability and responding promptly to revenue reductions, fostering financial transparency to enable effective adaptation to changing realities, investing in high-return activities even amid budget restructuring, phasing out programs that have a negative profit margin, intensifying fundraising efforts and building strategic partnerships in the face of declining state and university support, innovation in creating revenue-driven programs to meet community needs, targeting recruitment strategies for non-traditional learners, and focusing on developing a diverse mix of academic programs emphasizing career readiness through project-based and experiential learning. These measures are deemed essential for financial sustainability and meeting the evolving needs of the academic community.

As a member of the NKU Budget Executive Committee, our primary role is to advise the President regarding allocating the University's Central Revenues Fund. The goal is to make informed decisions on distributing these central resources that align with the university's strategic initiatives and are consistent with the institution's mission and priorities. Additionally, the committee is entrusted with evaluating any budget requests from Central Units. My involvement in the Budget Executive Committee has given me a broader perspective on university-level decision-making and financial and strategic considerations. This experience has enhanced my leadership skills, making me more effective in contributing to the university's overall success.

### ***Teaching, Learning, and Research Excellence***

Throughout my academic career, I have remained committed to advancing teaching, research, and service excellence. As an educator, I strive to create a dynamic learning environment, fostering student engagement and continuous learning. Successful teaching is rooted in nurturing students' abilities, and I encourage my colleagues to explore innovative pedagogical methods.

In addition to my dedication to teaching and research, I have demonstrated a deep commitment to advancing academic excellence and institutional integrity through my leadership roles in AACSB accreditation processes. My experience includes serving as Vice Chair of the AACSB Initial Accreditation Committee and a member of the AACSB Business Accreditation Policy Committee, where I have guided institutions in achieving and maintaining the highest standards of business education. I have successfully led several Continuous Improvement Review (CIR) visits, ensuring that the institutions I served met and exceeded the rigorous expectations set forth by AACSB. My role as Chair and member of various AACSB Business and Accounting Peer Review Teams has allowed me to apply a comprehensive understanding of accreditation principles to help institutions navigate the complexities of these processes effectively. This extensive involvement with AACSB has equipped me with the insights and strategies necessary to foster a culture of continuous improvement and academic excellence, which I am eager to bring to Texas A&M University-Commerce.

In 2020, the AACSB recognized the Haile College of Business at NKU as one of the world's top 25 innovative institutions, highlighting our commitment to educational excellence. Additionally, in 2021, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education acknowledged our impact on economically disadvantaged students, mainly through our Bachelor of Science in Economics and Bachelor in Entrepreneurship programs.

As a scholar, I have earned recognition for my research, with work published in reputable journals and presented at prestigious conferences. Under my leadership, Haile College implemented an innovative research strategy, fostering collaboration through research clusters and providing access to summer research grants and essential databases like WRDS, Compustat, CRSP, and TAQ, which are pivotal for faculty research. This approach has significantly enhanced our research quality and output.

I am confident I can bring this commitment to teaching, learning, and research excellence to TAMUC. I am excited about the prospect of fostering an environment of innovation and collaboration that drives student success and scholarly achievement. This excitement is contagious, and I am sure it will motivate others to join me in this journey.

### **Building Strategic Partnerships for Community Impact and Student Success**

As Dean at the Haile College of Business, I have successfully enhanced community engagement and generated revenue through strategic partnerships and impactful initiatives. For instance, working with my leadership team, we spearheaded the Financial Literacy Program, which received the Societal Impact Award from the Southern Business Administration Association in 2022. This program addressed equity disparities by collaborating with local high schools, businesses, and community leaders to provide essential financial education to underserved populations supported by leading financial institutions. Under my leadership, we established the Verst Group Logistics Hub of Supply Chain Excellence, a partnership with Paul Verst and Verst Group Logistics, positioning our college as a regional leader in supply chain management.

I led the creation of the "Haile Professional Development" program, a comprehensive initiative designed to meet the evolving needs of today's workforce. This program includes interactive Lunch 'n Learn sessions, intensive Bootcamps, non-credit certificates, and customizable business learning solutions. It also offers micro-credentials that stack toward degree pathways. Through this program, we provided impactful, flexible learning opportunities to support individual career growth and organizational development. Our Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, a beacon of hope for aspiring entrepreneurs, has served more than 181 startups, helping them raise over \$7 million in funds. Meanwhile, our BizAccessHub has supported over 75 small businesses in improving productivity and profitability.

I intend to leverage this experience to engage with the Dallas business community, creating programs that align with Texas A&M University-Commerce's mission of serving the region's educational and economic needs. By building solid relationships with local businesses, I aim to establish partnerships that create internship and job placement opportunities, develop executive education programs, and organize events connecting students with industry leaders.

### **Strategic Fundraising and Donor Engagement**

Fundraising has been a critical component of my role as Dean at the Haile College of Business. Under my leadership, discretionary college funding has more than tripled, thanks to a targeted approach to donor engagement and strategic initiatives. I have successfully led several fundraising campaigns, including a major initiative to support experiential learning by creating the Haile Micro Internships, establishing Farris Leadership Academy, The Verst Group Logistics Hub of Supply Chain Excellence, and three new student learning spaces.

In addition to increasing financial support from alumni and local businesses, I have also cultivated relationships with industry leaders to secure funding for new academic programs and research initiatives. At TAMUC, I will bring this same strategic focus to fundraising, working closely with the university's advancement team to identify and engage potential donors, craft compelling cases for support, and ensure that financial resources are aligned with the college's strategic priorities.

### **Collaborative Leadership and Transparent Governance**

As an academic leader, I am committed to fostering excellence through integrity, collegiality, and collaboration. My leadership approach emphasizes consensus-building, embracing diverse perspectives, and promoting open discourse in a supportive environment. I often use humor to diffuse tension. I balance challenges with support, nurture teamwork, and encourage individual initiative, constantly learning from each team member.

Central to my leadership philosophy is clear and compelling communication, which I have consistently prioritized. I have facilitated strategic initiative sessions involving faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders, ensuring that all voices were heard and diverse perspectives shaped our strategic direction. This approach resulted in a widely supported strategic plan and fostered a sense of ownership and commitment among participants.

My leadership is guided by fundamental principles such as attentive listening, acknowledging and addressing mistakes, and cultivating a culture of trust, transparent communication, accountability, and growth. I champion collaboration and empathy, creating an atmosphere where colleagues support one another, and camaraderie flourishes.

Shared governance is a cornerstone of my leadership approach, promoting continuous idea exchange through college meetings, town halls, open forums, and feedback sessions. My involvement in university committees, such as the Budget Executive Committee and the President's Council, has demonstrated my ability to navigate complex discussions, build consensus, and communicate decisions transparently. This inclusive approach fosters shared ownership in the college's success.

Recognizing and celebrating the contributions of faculty, staff, and students is fundamental to my leadership, achieved through awards, newsletters, and events. My track record aligns with the qualities you seek in a dean. I am confident that my collaborative mindset, commitment to inclusion, and leadership skills will enhance TAMUC's legacy of success. I look forward to exploring this opportunity further and discussing how my expertise can contribute to Texas A&M University-Commerce's ongoing success.

Best Regards,

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