

**JOSHUA LEWER, PH.D.**

October 9, 2023

Dr. John S. Vassar  
Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs  
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

Dear Dr. Vassar and Search Committee members:

Please consider me in your search for the next Dean of the McLane College of Business. This position offers a unique opportunity within the world of higher education in that UMHB promotes a Christ-centered approach to education yet the college holds ACBSP accreditation. This opportunity to work alongside administrators, faculty and staff who are committed to the Christian faith is infinitely exciting to me. My experience within academia has shown me that students need more than just intellectual and social development, they vitally need Christian spiritual formation.

The McLane College of Business has many things to be proud of, including successful student outcomes, an investment club, and a new 2022-2023 “Live on Purpose” Strategic Framework. I welcome the challenge of working with Provost Vassar, the academic leadership and the faculty and staff to move the college forward toward even greater success. I believe we now live in a time where effective business leaders of the world are seeking out places like UMHB for their graduates, that is, graduates who are committed to living a life of service, purpose and integrity. Business colleges that are mission focused and have a desire for innovation and collaborative learning are poised to thrive. With my experience and forward vision, I would be an excellent spokesperson for the McLane College of Business, and a passionate advocate of UMHB’s Mission and Values.

A careful examination of the leadership profile listed in the Dean’s announcement on your website provides a list of opportunities and focus. My background and curriculum vitae will demonstrate that I have many attributes of the desired leadership profile. While no candidate will have broad experiences in all desired categories, I hope my comments below will provide you with some additional information about myself and my leadership abilities.

*Academic and Administrative Background.*

I earned my Ph.D. and M.A. in economics from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln with a focus on the linkages between globalization and economic growth. Prior to that, I earned a B.A. in business administration and economics from Augustana College, a liberal arts school affiliated with the Lutheran church. Over the last twenty-five years, I have taught at a large R1, a comprehensive regional, and a secular comprehensive private university all within a college of business setting. I have earned tenure twice and achieved the rank of full professor. I have held three endowed positions at two universities. Two of these endowments come with a Lecture Series attached. These lectureships have allowed me to meet some of

the country's top performing leaders. I also enjoy the life of a classic professor; publishing nearly 50 PRJs, 6 books as well as winning several teaching awards from three universities. For my work extending the literature in immigration, I was awarded the designation of Research Fellow at the prestigious Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) in Bonn, Germany.

Starting fall 2023, I am serving as the Acting Associate Dean for Future Initiatives for the Foster College of Business and the Caterpillar College of Engineering at Bradley University in Peoria, IL. My focus has been on promoting interdisciplinary education and leading the colleges on new initiatives that enhance enrollment, learning and research. I have also served as Chair of the Economics and Finance department for six years. Some of my main accomplishments include: successfully merging two departments into one, initiating curriculum development including business and engineering convergence projects, fundraising, managing budgets, faculty development and strengthening external relations. At West Texas A&M University, I served as Associate Director of the M.S. in Finance and Economics and increased enrollments, diversity of students and curricular electives.

### *Leadership Profile Statement.*

I believe my leadership profile can be summed up with the following statement:

I am a successful academic and administrator known for hard work, a positive attitude, a personable team builder, a curriculum developer, a promoter of experiential learning and interdisciplinary initiatives, a successful fundraiser who enjoys meeting alumni and external partners, and an advocate of Christian education and its vital role in developing healthy individuals and communities.

### *Performance Evaluations and Professional Development.*

It is always rewarding to me when my faculty and staff exhibit enhanced performance and teamwork. I strive to find what people are passionate about and then provide them with the tools and resources necessary to accomplish their goals. With respect to performance evaluations and professional development, I read all faculty and staff activity reports within my department and do a thorough evaluation of their performance. An annual plan coupled with in-class teaching observations and student teaching reports are also part of my evaluation process. I work with personnel to develop plans to mitigate any deficiencies. Lastly, in an effort to promote academic excellence, professional development initiatives are expected and budgeted for.

### *Strategic Planning and Budgeting.*

I have served on the Strategic Leadership Team here at the Foster College of Business for over six years. In that time, we have developed two mission statements and two comprehensive strategic plans that established a vision for the college. I recently became a Certified Strategic Doing© Practitioner trained to lead groups through devising tactical and micro-initiatives of strategic plans. This is the bottom up approach to filling out high impact and low-cost projects. In reviewing UMHB's Live on Purpose Strategic Framework, I see

exciting aspects of the plan, in particular, efforts to grow enrollments through innovative programs, streamline curricula and developing Christian leaders.

Over the years, I have advocated for transparent budgetary processes within the department and college. While I make independent decisions on resource allocations based on a cost-benefit analysis ranking, I do share pertinent financial information with my department members and allow them some ownership. For example, how much do we allocate toward conference travel and how is it to be equitably distributed. For large purchases such as establishing our Student Managed Investment Fund and associated financial database access (i.e. Refinitiv Eikon Data Stream), I work with the University's CFO and College's Assistant Dean for Budget and Planning.

#### *Class Schedule and Dean Teaching Load.*

I currently set the schedule for roughly 70 unique economics, finance and quantitative analysis courses each academic year. Because many of our classes are linked to other majors, I work with the Associate Dean and other Department Chairs to ensure adequate coverage and to reduce schedule overlap. I recruit and maintain a close relationship with my six part-time affiliate faculty.

The position announcement mentions that UMHB's Deans teach up to two courses per year. While most business Dean appointments do not entail classroom responsibilities, I find there to be some significant positives. First, I enjoy teaching and getting to know my students on a personal level. The love of teaching is why I became a professor. Also, when a Dean teaches, they can fully relate to faculty situations. Plus, this is potentially a recruiting point for potential students and parents to see their Dean in the classroom.

#### *ACBSP and AACSB and Accreditation Experiences.*

I am currently assisting with the formal Continuous Improvement Review (CIR) Report for AACSB accreditation. As the Foster College of Business here at Bradley is gearing up for its 2025 CIR, I am becoming familiar with the new 2020 accreditation standards and recently went through AACSB's Societal Impact Workshop that assists colleges in developing measurable societal impacts by linking the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals to their strategic initiatives. I have served on the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee that generated and measured Assurance of Learning (AOL) goals, and as mentioned above, I am a Certified Strategic Doing<sup>®</sup> Practitioner. Lastly, I continue to chair the team that wrote Bradley University's Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Criterion 5 on resources for the 2021 accreditation cycle.

#### *Community Linkage and Advancement Efforts.*

Universities are becoming the economic engines of communities. A healthy college of business is one that develops regional partnerships and relationships that are mutually beneficial. Here at Bradley, I strive to engaged with our alumni and community. We have established internships and are working on developing an active departmental advisory board

to partner with. I would be excited to work with McLane faculty on ways to strengthen collaboration and community ties in Belton, TX.

Over the last six years, I have worked with college development officers to secure nearly \$1.7 million in donations for the department and its students. I enjoy meeting with alumni and donors.

*Christ-Centered Approach to Education and UMHB Mission and Values.*

As mentioned in my statement of faith, I experienced first-hand the faith-building importance of a Christ-centered college experience. Sadly, our country is trending in the wrong direction when it comes to the percentage of the population that is either unchurched or dechurched. And, at the same time, many traditional Christian universities that young people could count on in the past to provide faith-building experiences have become increasingly secular, making a place like UMHB so very important and unique. It is an oasis in the desert. The UMHB values statement declares that, "...the university seeks to develop graduates of strong Christian character and integrity who are able to communicate effectively, think critically, and solve complex problems." This reflects my views as an educator and a Christian. I enthusiastically support UMHB mission, vision and values statements.

I am an active member of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Washington, IL where I enjoy teaching adult Sunday School classes to a group of about 30-40 on any given Sunday. I also serve on the Church Council as Treasurer. I have been a church elder and teen faith mentor in the past.

In closing, I have been in academia for 23 years now and am ready to take on the full responsibility of Dean. You would get a committed and passionate leader who will work diligently alongside you to develop and achieve strategic goals, enhance student experiences, advance academic curriculum, promote community engagement, and encourage Christian values and faith of everyone associated with the McLane School of Business. I look forward to speaking with you about this position.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Joshua J. Lewer

Enclosures