

Tony E. Wohlers, Ph.D.

November 26, 2023

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

Throughout my professional career at Harford Community College, Cameron University, and Eastern Illinois University, I have been fortunate to have a wide range of experiences that have enriched and deepened my leadership, teaching, service skills and abilities. These opportunities have been part of my journey and have infused my academic philosophy, which envisions a society where communities are empowered to uplift and enable diverse members to achieve their goals through a community college education. Community colleges are catalysts for change and engines of prosperity. They are vital in combating poverty and inequality by offering access to high quality and affordable education, fostering inclusivity, and enabling individuals to break socio-economic barriers and uplift their communities. I believe that I am fully prepared for the position of Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. Your mission of championing equity opportunity, innovation, and excellence aligns with my personal mission, skills and abilities that have been honed over the past 20 years.

I see academic affairs as a place where transformative magic shapes the college and community it serves. It is the role of academic affairs to promote an inclusive and diverse working environment where faculty and staff thrive in a culture of innovation using high-impact learning strategies to empower students to become global and civic-minded contributors to our community. The utilization of data and alignment with institutional effectiveness serve as critical components guiding academic affairs and the college towards enhanced and sustained student success. Moreover, working together with a center for excellence in teaching and learning, the goal is to provide every student with the resources to increase their self-efficacy, overall knowledge, skills, abilities, and perspectives needed to problem-solve, think critically, and prepare them to navigate their ever-changing unique environments successfully and creatively. In alignment with this vision of academic affairs and guided by lifelong learning, I would work with faculty, staff, and students to identify current recruitment, retention, and completion efforts as a primary focus. The deliberate goal is to close achievement gaps for all students and provide pathways that allow students to persist and reach their personal goals, whether they are degree, certificate, job, or transfer focused.

I believe that upon reviewing my curriculum vitae, you will recognize my consistent demonstration of effective leadership as an academic dean, director, and faculty member, thereby underscoring my dedication to championing student success while facilitating the growth of faculty and staff. Examples can be seen in my works as a Dean at Harford Community College where I was able to implement and refine collegial governance structures, lead a thriving Honors Program, expand innovative curriculum and methodology, and advance undergraduate research, service learning, and experiential learning. As the inaugural Director of Academic Enrichment at Cameron University, I have designed, implemented, assessed numerous synergistic and data-informed strategies to build the curriculum paradigm of the honors program steeped in best practices, and expanded the Study Abroad Program, while successfully advancing grant-driven research. Throughout my professional journey, one of the most exciting parts of

these student success missions was celebrating and recognizing the talent around me that makes our collaborative work come to life and getting to see the fruits of our labor at each commencement.

In the pursuit of shaping an improved academic affairs division that promotes access and enrollment growth, I take pride in being the sole academic division at Harford Community College that has consistently and systematically integrated non-credit and workforce development, particularly within the realms of workforce and credit/non-credit pathways. These efforts are illustrated by the management and expansion of the only Childcare Apprenticeship in the State of Maryland, oversight of the Child Care Career Professional Development Fund program sponsored by the Maryland Department of Education, development of credit and non-credit pathways in teacher education, and implementation of a cohort-based accelerated online program for the Harford County Sheriff Training Academy.

My adaptive leadership style has allowed me to mentor-coach faculty and staff to embrace an inclusive, innovative, interdisciplinary, and aspirational environment. Within the context of a flexible leadership style and with the goal to build educational outcomes that strengthen the mission, vision, and values of the college, I had the opportunity to guide more than 100 faculty and staff across the behavioral sciences, nursing, and allied health divisions, Early Learning Center, and Fitness Center. As a result, my effective leadership impacted a wide range of areas, including NSF/Perkins Grants, Honors Program, credit/non-credit/workforce pathways, dual enrollment and early college, and flexible learning options through enhanced course delivery modalities. Finally, I was fortunate to lead and participate in internal and external accreditation efforts with major independent third-party entities in the country. These experiences have equipped me with the knowledge to understand the process of accreditation and to lead this critical aspect of academic excellence.

I recognize the importance of cultivating partnerships with stakeholders that can be deliberately linked to the college as resources to amplify the mission of community colleges as an Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. During my professional career, I have built strong partnerships with diverse organizations at the community, regional, state, national, and international level. Most recently, with my extensive civic engagement leadership activities, I systematically linked Harford Community College to relevant not-for-profit organizations, while creating leadership, scholarship, experiential learning, and professional development opportunities for students and faculty. Some of the examples of my synergetic-driven community stewardship include my leadership roles in the Harford County Trauma Institute and Harford County Department of Social Services Citizen Advisory Board creating opportunities for faculty involvement. Moreover, I am proud to share the coordination of a major capital improvement project that will lead to the creation of a museum space to honor the legacies of Dr. Kelly (one of the founding members of the Johns Hopkins Medical School and champion of inclusive approaches and civil rights). During my earlier career, I became involved and eventually served as the President of the Wichita Mountain Prevention Network Board of Directors – a not-for-profit organization in southwest Oklahoma focused on substance abuse prevention and, as a result, saving lives. This focus on collaboration resulted in an increased impact of community organizations, while working with Native American Tribes and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

I believe that this letter and my curriculum vita demonstrate that I will be an excellent Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at Monroe Community College. I look forward to the opportunity to

expand my leadership experiences, qualities, skills and abilities as an administrator and mentor. I believe Monroe Community College will gain a collaborative, dedicated and goal-oriented professional that will advance the mission of the College, foster opportunities for professional growth of faculty and staff, and increase academic success of students. I would be honored to work with you to further the College's *Vision2027* and adhere to its strong core values.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony E. Wohlers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tony E. Wohlers, Ph.D.