

April 21, 2023

Re: Assistant Vice President, Student Success and Strategic Initiatives

Dear HR Professional and Hiring Manager:

My role as an administrator is to provide high-quality services that contribute to the academic, personal, and social success of all students. My years in higher education have led to strategic planning in the academic and student affairs environments, managing complex organizational structures, and success leading transformational change. As change is a constant in higher education, developing effective collaborative partnerships has been one of my many strengths and success. The ability to foster partnerships with campus auxiliaries and state agencies has been critical in student success, retention, and completion initiatives.

The work that I have done in higher education have been around student retention and initiatives focus on increasing retention. Through the development of the intrusive advising program at Lincoln University, my advising team was able to increase the retention rates of first-year freshman students by 5%. As I progressed in my higher education career, I was able to improve upon the intrusive advising program by turning it into the Comprehensive Advising Model. Because I had experience creating the Comprehensive Advising Model, I was hired by Western Kentucky University to create this model for the institution. As a result, the advising team was able to increase the retention rates of first year freshman students by 4.6%. While at Christian Brothers University using the Comprehensive Advising Model, my team was able to increase the retention rates by 4%.

As a leader in higher education, my commitment to inclusive excellence and diversity is strong. My belief has been to chart a course that will open doors for minority students. It is important that advocacy for the voiceless and the respect of differences is an institutional best practice. Therefore, my skills as an energetic visionary with competencies in cultural fluency and emotional intelligence have assisted me to inspire others and connect with underrepresented communities.

My strong communication and conflict-resolution skills have been essential to navigate socially and politically charged situations and build consensus. As a critical and creative thinker, many new and innovative programs have been created to improve career readiness, student retention, persistence, and student success. Additionally, my strong skills in assessment and program evaluation to make data-driven decisions, as well as the ability to collect and analyze data, is demonstrated through my assessment plans and the creation of new programs.

Through a collaborative partnership with other academic and student affairs professionals, I have successfully worked to improve student success, retention, persistence, and completion initiatives through the development and implementation of the following departmental and institutional strategic plans:

- Five-year Strategic Enrollment and Recruitment Plan
- Five-year Strategic Advising Plan
- Strategic Retention Plan
- Strategic Assessment Plan
- Strategic Collaborative Plan (Among Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Enrollment Management and Student Success)

My goal in higher education has always been to be a champion for the well-being of all students and serve them with excellence. It is important to understand that all students are different but what must become a constant and consistent practice is to implement innovative programming that engages students in meaningful experiences. I have implemented or worked with the following programs to engage students:

- Helped students to select their best-fit major through the use of the MyMajors Assessment.
- Utilized ACT Engage to associate non-cognitive and cognitive factors to retention readiness.

- Developed Gen X, a program for first-generation students.
- Developed Project Majors, a partnership program with Career Development.
- Developed a centralized advising program for first and second-year students.
- Developed an advising council.
- Worked with the Summer Bridge program to help students with academic deficiencies.
- Developed the Comprehensive Advising Model to provide a holistic approach to serving first-generation, low-income, minority, and academically underprepared students.
- Developed curriculum and programming around diversity and inclusion activities.

Students' satisfaction within higher education is crucial to retention and student success. Through the development of an Advising Satisfaction Survey, over 900 students were surveyed during the 2018-2019 academic year. Although the survey results concluded an overwhelming service to female students as opposed to male students, 99% of all students stated they were satisfied with their advising experience.

As an added benefit, I have much experience with HLC and SACS COC accreditation, curriculum and course development, assessments, research, retention and customer service management systems (EAB Navigate, Ellucian e-Advise, Pharos 360, and Starfish), and teaching online and ground courses in leadership, management, and conflict studies. Also, my experience preparing and managing budgets has been critical to the success of developing programs for first-generation and at-risk students. I have a wealth of experience with federal funds, SAFRA grants, and Title III.

Thank you for your consideration of my application. I believe that I am the candidate to perform the job at the highest level and I look forward to discussing my qualifications in person.

Best regards,

Dr. Ahmad R. Sims I