

Mike Godard, Ph.D.

February 9, 2024

Presidential Search Committee
Indiana State University

Dear Presidential Search Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my interest in the position of President at Indiana State University (ISU) and specifically, to share how my professional experience directly relates to the requirements for strategic leadership to shape the future of ISU. The University's fundamental principles of learning, discovery, engagement, and inclusiveness directly aligns with my core values. I have great respect for Indiana State University as a public comprehensive regional university dedicated to empowering transformational change in its students and the community. Having served at public comprehensive regional institutions for my entire career, I have a firm understanding of the creative solutions that are vital to systematically respond to the ongoing higher education challenges necessary to ensure that Indiana State University continues to excel.

Throughout my time at Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO), I have been afforded opportunities to influence change. I led academic affairs through an academic prioritization review of all academic majors, minors, and certificates. We took a comprehensive approach to examining those programs by engaging the faculty, chairs, deans, and faculty senate committees as part of the review process. The result of this process was hundreds of course revisions and program changes through a shared governance process. The intent was to better align programs with employer workforce needs and imbed industry recognized credentials into the academic programs where appropriate. Discipline specific advisory boards were created to ensure that there was a direct connection with industry needs that would be reflected in the curriculum. This also allowed for an enhancement in experiential learning opportunities for our students through newly developed industry and alumni partnerships. This has allowed for an enhancement of the economic impact that the University is having in the region and throughout the state. Through this process we decided to reallocate some resources where appropriate and created several new academic programs. Notably one that we created was an undergraduate degree in aviation (professional pilot). This program is a public-private partnership with the regional airport that is operated by the city and a third-party vendor that supplies the aircraft, flight instructors and the aircraft maintenance. The initial cohort was conservatively estimated to have about 10 students, but we had such extreme interest that we were able enroll over 35 students in the inaugural class in Fall 2021 and now in only the third year of the program we have over 100 declared majors. We also created several new undergraduate programs and accelerated graduate programs that provide students with a flexible way to engage in the learning process.

Additionally, I co-chaired our university strategic planning committee that resulted in a board approved plan. The planning process allowed for all constituents both internal and external to the university to be involved and provide input and feedback. All divisions across the university are utilizing key performance indicators and metrics to ensure that the goals and actions in the plan are realized. One of the major initiatives that we are undertaking that is a component of the strategic action plan is the creation of more experimental learning opportunities for our students that start in the first semester and build throughout the academic program. A component of this initiative is to create stackable credentialing that provides students with marketable and industry recognized skills/knowledge that makes them job ready to meet workforce needs and demands. Also, during my tenure at SEMO we were successful in obtaining reaccreditation through the Higher Learning Commission for the maximum 10-years with no findings of non-compliance along with many program specific successful reaccreditations. SEMO is also conducting a capital campaign that I have been working very closely

with our advancement division on over the past couple of years. I have been directly involved with acquiring significant donor contributions (\$500,000+) and several are already directly impacting our students in very positive ways. I enjoy and take great pride in cultivating donor relationships to ensure that there is alignment with the passions and desires of the donors to the university mission and our future needs. Additionally, as a former student athlete I have experienced, firsthand, the transformational impact that college athletics can have on young adults. I have been fortunate to collaborate with intercollegiate athletics on several advancement and student success initiatives that have resulted in enhanced athletics/academic engagements across campus. I have also had the pleasure of working directly with leadership within the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference to bring more synergies to academics and athletics. I am confident that my experiences in these key areas can lead to a collaborative mindset at Indiana State University and enhancing the university's brand, resources, and portfolio of programs that highlight the distinctiveness of its mission and meet the needs of Terre Haute and the West Central Indiana region.

I served as Interim Provost and Chief Learning Officer at the University of Central Missouri (UCM) and as Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and Student Success. My service in these two roles provided our team the opportunity to design and implement the University's college completion agenda. This agenda helped to make college possible for more students, significantly increasing persistence and completion rates, while at the same time graduating the highest number of students in school history and concurrently reducing student loan debt. Additionally, I was responsible for working collaboratively across campus with both faculty and staff to reorganize the academic units. This allowed for increased efficiencies in the operations of the degree programs and provided more synergy to both the curricular and scholarly pursuits. Academic quality and the focus on both instruction and scholarship opportunities were paramount throughout the decision-making process. This allowed for incredible conversations and shared governance with the faculty on how we could best serve our students to ensure their success in an efficient and sustainable manner. Simultaneously, we completed a revamping of the student success continuum to ensure that the university aligned itself appropriately with the goal of increasing retention and completion rates. This involved moving from a decentralized advising model to a coordinated holistic intentional success advising model. These efforts resulted in improved student outcomes and experiences for the diverse student population that we served. This included traditional, non-traditional, military/veterans, and students representing various and intersecting identities. As a first-generation college student, one of my career goals has been to make positive impacts closing the achievement gap with first generation, Pell eligible and historically underrepresented students. The early adoption and utilization of predictive analytics allowed for a very proactive approach to the national agenda for college completion. The university was also awarded a \$2.7 million Department of Education Title III grant that allowed for even more efforts to be focused on eliminating achievement gaps. We were successful in removing barriers and providing appropriate resources to ensure success and inclusiveness.

I have extensive experience creating and building external relationships and partnerships. Both at SEMO and UCM I had oversight for the regional campuses and delivery sites. At SEMO we have two regional campuses and a delivery site. At UCM there was one regional campus that included adult workforce education, non-credit and credit career pathways, and other stackable credential initiatives both degree and non-degree seeking through our extended campus division. I have worked cooperatively with our K-12 partners and community college colleagues over the past decade on a variety of joint initiatives as a part of these partnerships. Through the K-12, community college, and public four-year partnerships it has allowed students to graduate with a four-year degree in a fraction of the time and with lower debt. The relationships that we have built with the community partnerships have resulted in a better awareness of the university brand and allowed us to hear and listen to what the community needs from the university and most importantly our students/graduates. I am confident that I could positively influence and enhance the external relationships and expand on the partnerships that Indiana State University has within the Terre Haute and West Central region. Of particular importance would be to work to build and expand upon existing connections with regional businesses, local and state governments to promote and enhance workforce development. I would be fully committed to building authentic trusting relationships with both internal and external constituents that translates into an inclusive learning environment allowing all students to flourish.

I have been fortunate to serve on the Missouri Department of Higher Education Chief Academic Council. Participating in this group for over six years has allowed me to gain valuable insights and provide feedback/guidance for current and future issues facing higher education. In addition, I have been involved with the Council on Public Higher Education as a resource to the executive director and to other member institutions to help advance the mission of four-year universities and increasing the understanding and appreciation of higher education by state leaders and the public at-large. My involvement with these two groups and engagement with state legislators have resulted in a comprehensive understanding of the budget and funding process in the state. Most recently we have worked with state and federal legislators to secure significant support for program enhancements and capital improvements and construction of a new Health Sciences building. I believe that I possess the political savvy and experience working with local and state government leaders to meet the institutional and regional needs/goals.

Prior to my current role as Provost at SEMO and as Interim Provost and Chief Learning Officer at UCM, I served as Vice Provost for Student Success/Enrollment Management at UCM. In this role, I was able to work cooperatively with academic and support units across campus to achieve record enrollments and simultaneously increase our incoming student academic credentials. My focus while serving in this role was to ensure that we enhanced access and provided affordability for all students. Retention rates climbed each of my three years in this position all while increasing the avenues of access and affordability for all students. Specifically, we instituted academic and co-curricular support services to help students progress towards completing their degree by eliminating as many barriers as possible. We revamped our scholarship program to ensure that we provided adequate aid to our students working collaboratively with the foundation office to secure donor support. While overseeing student success and enrollment management efforts and initiatives, I was able to successfully change the culture and incorporate values that centered on taking an individualized student focused approach to provide maximal flexibility for our traditional, non-traditional, and military affiliated students.

My academic career has provided leadership opportunities as a faculty member and department chairperson. As Chairperson of a large department, I was able to develop, implement and maintain an annual and long-range plan that resulted in a significant increase in the total declared majors. This included fundraising across our donor base allowing for more innovative and creative opportunities for our students and faculty. We also had the opportunity to develop new degree programs that exceeded enrollment projections. I firmly believe in the teacher scholar model and feel that the best way that we can help ensure that our students are successful is to provide an ethic of care and investment in the high-quality faculty and staff who teach and mentor them in and out of the classroom. Providing adequate resources to academic programs and the faculty who teach and perform scholarly activities is paramount to the short and long-term viability of the University.

I believe I have the interpersonal skills, enthusiasm, can-do attitude, and work ethic to serve as president at ISU. I have a very strong commitment to professional ethics and fostering a collegial environment. My leadership style is one of shared governance, which is characterized by cooperation and democratic decision-making, with the ability to build consensus through the articulation of shared values and goals. I can make a difficult decision when necessary; however, my philosophy is to be transparent in that such decisions will be guided by strategic plans and core values. I see effective communication as essential when making decisions so that people will understand the rationale for a decision. I am open to new and differing ideas and encourage people around me to provide alternative views and to work together in making the most informed decisions, which are guided by data and principles.

The progress we are making to address public policy issues requires working actively across state government and impacts the higher education public policy agenda. Across my professional journey there are commonalities that can help define the future potential for leadership of the many assets and the strong foundation that defines Indiana State University including:

- Collaborating to enhance shared governance by working with the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, and all campus constituencies;

- The stewardship and development of resources and the enhancement of institutional performance built on student success outcomes with a focus on retention and completion;
- Leading an institutional commitment for an inclusive campus environment for all;
- Be a champion for faculty and staff by providing the support and resources required for the learning environment of the future;
- Innovation driven by partnerships and collaboration in the Terre Haute and surrounding communities, the West Central region and throughout the state of Indiana;
- Visibility both internally and externally serving as the chief ambassador of Indiana State University;
- Building and leading a unified and collective vision for the future that includes strategic growth and innovative funding initiatives;
- Responsiveness to community, region and statewide needs including economic and workforce development;
- Securing greater levels of investment by the State, foundations, individual donors, and leading major fundraising initiatives;
- College affordability and access; and
- The ability to relate directly with all students and ensure everyone feels sense of belonging.

Indiana State University fulfills the critical mission of being a university that prepares students for academic, professional, and personal success. This commitment is evident by the leadership of your faculty and staff, and the example set by your students as a leading university for educational opportunity that has opened the door of college access across the region. The State of Indiana represents the single largest donor to ISU. The stewardship and accountability provided to donors who make individual investments is the same level of responsibility public universities are required to provide to the citizens of Indiana. I would look forward to working with you and becoming highly engaged as a member of the Terre Haute community and the region to reach these critical goals. Public higher education must continue to address the issues of college costs/student loan debt, educational opportunity required for every student, along with workforce needs and the talent required to drive a competitive economy. Indiana State University's instruction, scholarship and service will be required to lead to ensure that we can find solutions to these principal issues.

The president, working collaboratively with the Board of Trustees and the faculty/staff of the University will provide leadership that effectively meets the needs in the region and throughout the State of Indiana. There is a strong foundation at ISU along with positive momentum that transcends the university in many ways both curricular and co-curricular. This leadership position is required for securing the economic, social, and educational viability of the people we serve, and I would be honored to have the opportunity to serve as the next president and lead a team of dedicated professionals to meet the need of the students and ensure that Indiana State University achieves its full potential. I am committed to fostering and enhancing an inclusive work and learning environment across the university for all students, faculty, and staff. Thank you for considering my interest.

Respectfully,



Mike Godard, Ph.D.