

Dear Hiring Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in serving as the next President of Salt Lake Community College. SLCC is one of the top colleges in the country, clearly has a very bright future, and is a key driver for economic and workforce development. I have frequently looked to SLCC for best practices, especially regarding teaching excellence and workforce strategies. On a more personal note, we have family in the Salt Lake area, and I am so excited to return to the hiking and biking trails of the Mountain West region. It breaks my heart to leave my current college, but I cannot pass on this opportunity. I know that I can continue the great culture of excellence at Salt Lake Community College and ensure that we are an asset to our community for decades to come.

As you review my resume, you will find that my credentials and experience exceed the desired criteria. Additionally, the following is a concise list of my most relevant qualifications:

- President at Mountwest Community and Technical College in Huntington, WV. A rapidly growing college in both size and influence.
- Vice President of Instruction at Pikes Peak State College (formerly Pikes Peak Community College), a 20,000-student college with four campuses. The dynamics of Pikes Peak and Colorado Springs are remarkably similar to SLCC.
- Aspen Institute Presidential Fellow for Community College Excellence, 2019-2020.
- PhD in Community College Leadership from Oregon State University. Researched actions of community college presidents that increased organizational trust.
- Successful legislative work, including state funding of dual credit in West Virginia, funding for apprenticeship leading to college credentials, two federal earmarks, and extensive work with Department of Education regarding partnered training programs.
- Worked with multiple institutions to build statewide initiatives around dual credit, workforce, and transfer in Washington (state), Colorado, and West Virginia.
- Faculty member at Highline College, the most diverse college in the state of Washington.

For the remainder of this letter, I will explore how my experience will support my success as the President of Salt Lake Community College. I will directly address the six Strategic Opportunities from the position profile by highlighting my most relevant experience with bullet points, and then share my insights on addressing the Strategic Opportunities at SLCC.

Lead the campus strategic plan and a unified vision for supporting the state and the region's 2-year college needs.

- Finalized a one-year strategic plan in preparation for accreditation visit within months of being hired as President. This plan launched us into a cultural shift, and a new period of growth at the college. A second strategic plan was developed through a collaborative and comprehensive process. Our annual process includes checkpoints so that our leadership team, the board, and the college can verify our progress. We have increased

Dr. Josh Baker

student attainment, enrollment, industry partnerships, fundraising, reserves, achieved funding increases from the legislature, and successfully relaunched our foundation.

- Cultivated partnerships to address a variety of community needs, including hungry children, comprehensive addiction recovery programs, development of a local non-profit tourist attraction, and recruiting new companies.
- Developed two strategic plans at Pikes Peak, as part of the Executive Team. Created a planning process that developed annual work plans, mid-year progress review, and incorporation into annual goals and reviews. Resulted in increased enrollment, improved success metrics, and improvement on achievement gaps.
- Active in a corrections transition group, youth experiencing homelessness, and ESL pathways to careers while at Bates Technical College.

As the President of SLCC I will enthusiastically engage in the strategic planning process, which from the website appears to be in development. I appreciate the commitment to an inclusive and comprehensive process. Following the approval of the plan, I will work with my team to ensure we fulfill our commitments. We will create an annual work plan each year, and review our progress regularly. We will report our progress to our campus, board, and community.

In the position profile, I note the invitation to solve community challenges as part of the strategic plan. I will regularly meet with elected officials, chambers, development authorities, k-12 and university leadership, and other non-profits. SLCC will remain active in recruiting and supporting companies, and preparing our students for careers. We will also pursue solutions for the community challenges, like homelessness, transportation, and food scarcity.

Serve as an advocate for the institution, its missions, and its programs within the higher education landscape of the state and region.

- Led college to prominence, from “irrelevant” (board chairs words). I presented our data and story to Rotaries, City Clubs, and community groups. Invited to present at the West Virginia State Chamber Conference, the first time a community college presented from “the big stage”. I have told our story to high schools, parents, and thousands more.
- Developed dynamic relationship with Marshall University and our local high schools, to pathways to prosperity.

There is no public entity in the state of Utah that plays a larger role in economic development, and creating pathways to prosperity. SLCC is the most diverse, and inclusive institution in Utah. I would ask for the help of the college leadership and board members to create opportunities to meet as many community leaders as possible in my first 6 months. I need to meet with our key legislative allies well in advance of the session starting in January. I also look forward to meeting with existing donors, and exploring opportunities to identify new potential donors. I especially look forward to the 1-on-1 meetings where I can befriend our partners.

Additionally, new presidents have many opportunities to speak to groups. Not only is this a chance to introduce myself, but this is a chance to tell the SLCC story. Institutional

Effectiveness will be a valuable guide as they provide the most relevant data points to tell our story.

Finally, I value the relationship with other educational institutions. I would like to network with the Superintendents from our high schools. I will also prioritize the institutions where our students transfer, certainly to include our neighbor, the University of Utah. I anticipate the team will be able to guide me to the most important relationships, and the right opportunities.

Foster a welcoming and positive campus environment throughout the SLCC system, recognizing and supporting students, faculty, and staff.

- Hosting frequent events to interact with students (food and games). Created and presented leadership training for Mountwest students. An avid fan of student performances, and competitions.
- Participated and thoroughly enjoyed being a student mentor at Pikes Peak as part of Men of Color initiative. Attended student art shows, productions, and events.
- Led increased commitment to employee celebrations and time together.

Legislative dynamics threaten to make our campuses feel less safe for some members of our community. Some of these issues are out of our control. It is important that we follow legal guidance, and show legislators we want to partner to accomplish the best outcome. Within these limitations, we can still message acceptance, appreciation, and love for our students, employees, and community. This is not necessarily easy, but I have found transparent communication, and heart felt commitment individually expressed, goes a long way. This is a challenge in West Virginia, and I understand that the dynamics in Utah may be similar.

I am enthused about SLCC's HSI status. We were pursuing this designation at Pikes Peak, and our representation increased from 17%-22%. Even more important than generating enrollment, our community needs increased representation from our Hispanic friends to achieve the educated workforce we need. I will champion Hispanic students at SLCC.

I feel compelled to identify another population we are losing from our institutions, men. Recent enrollment trends indicate men are flocking towards short term training options. Short term stackable credentials with in-demand skills are essential for our students and employers.

As the SLCC President, I will also champion diversity of thought. I am alarmed by the increasing polarization of politics and ideologies. Higher Ed must demonstrate appreciation for those that have different ideas. As President, I must demonstrate this openly, and often. A culture of care, compassion, and belonging is an absolute.

Champion completion of academic and technical credentials.

- Guided Mountwest to be one of the most innovative workforce providers in the country. We are launching multiple programs each year. All new programs include some of the following elements: flexible for working adults, awarding stackable short term (micro) credentials, accelerated, Learn and Earn, and located in the workplace.

- Overcame lowest success rates in the state by increasing retention and graduation rates. Our transfer enrollments are increasing, and our success rates in science classes are especially improving. Data and focused development drive the improvement.
- Increased retention and graduation rates while VP at Pikes Peak. There was a notable increase for students of color, first gen students, and Pell students.

Enhancing student success always starts with data. The data identifies changes we can make in degree design, teacher training, and wrap around supports. Great leaders, at all levels of the organization, help us identify opportunities, make the changes, and evaluate the impact.

An outstanding leadership team is critical in driving improvements in student success. This will require both great hiring, and purposeful individual and team development. I would trust search committees to advance strong leaders, with a proven record of innovating in academic settings. I desire values-based leaders, that improve performance because they love students. Leaders at all levels will have opportunities to participate in leadership development.

Lead a financially sustainable education model that provides for expansion of SLCC's campuses in service to their communities.

- Completed a necessary 10% reduction in force in my first year at Mountwest with full board support. After a thoughtful process, we began to rebuild. Today we are sitting on four straight semesters of 10-20% growth in enrollment.
- Organized an annual planning and budgeting process that ensures we are investing in priorities and utilizing our allocated resources. Having been at different institutions, in different states, has given me valuable perspective.
- Mountwest is now amongst the most financially stable institutions in the state, and is the only college to not raise tuition the past two years.

The continued growth within the SLCC service area will require us to carefully analyze and plan. With each of my career stops I have been a builder, growing enrollment and programming. Every solution has been unique and was discovered through a proactive learning process that utilizes listening to our stakeholders as we analyze data and trends. I certainly would not pretend to know what will be successful at SLCC, but my experience has helped refine my evaluation skills.

Lead through innovation and a willingness to embrace the current higher education landscape.

- Implementing micro-credential strategies. Navigating challenging dynamics in West Virginia as universities explore short term trainings and associate degrees, and legislators consider mergers.

It is only a matter of time before Short Term Pell is approved. Community Colleges will thrive with this change because of our previous success in short term credentials, and our

understanding of our students. This will be impactful on enrollment and completion, and will utilize the pathways model.

Higher Ed feels more volatile than it has in the past. The mission lines that divide institutions are blurry. It is critical that we anticipate market changes with at least a 5-10-year outlook, if not longer. Community Colleges proudly sit on a history of innovative design that is built around our diverse students. At SLCC, I would ensure that our relationships with industry are stronger than ever.

Final Thoughts

I'd like to specify key strengths that will ensure my successful leadership at SLCC.

I lead innovation by building a culture of trust. I practice transparency and want direct input from the college. I desire frequent open forums and happily engage with shared governance groups. I want to create stability in a transition year, and lay the foundation for inclusive leadership, trust, and innovation for years to come. My leadership style was validated via surveys at Pikes Peak, with confidence of faculty in leadership increasing 24% after my first year. Research and observation confirm that trust enhances innovation. I embrace that the best ideas come from the people doing the work, and we need to empower our innovators.

I solve community challenges. My work as President of Mountwest has been driven by an intense commitment to address community issues. Our state has painfully low college completion rates, and companies are desperate for skilled workers. Our community has rallied around us as we align with the opportunities. I could share many stories about working with development authorities, hospitals, legislators, and companies. Our community partners are literally begging us to help solve their problems, and it is a privilege to collaborate to this end.

I am strategic in navigating politics and fundraising. I build friendships, listen, and help legislators and donors identify projects that align with their passion and values. Our legislators tend to care about work-based learning and increasing degree attainment. Meanwhile, most of our donors are passionate about students overcoming barriers. It is so rewarding to help these key stakeholders identify what gets them excited and motivated to help our cause.

Being a community college president is so fun. I love my students, the college team, and the community we serve. It would be my honor to serve as the President of Salt Lake Community College. It is an ideal professional and personal fit. I would hope to serve in this role for a minimum of ten years, and very likely until I retire. I will continue the tradition of excellence of SLCC, and shepherd a culture of trust and innovation.

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