

Robert D. Lyman, Ph. D.
Clinical Psychologist
331 North Ridge Circle
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To Whom It May Concern:

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to apply for the position of Provost at The University of Southern Mississippi. I believe that my experience and skills have prepared me well for this position. From 1975 until 1978 I was a faculty member in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Alabama in Birmingham and from 1978 until 2003 I served as a department head within the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. For 19 of these years I was Executive Director of Brewer-Porch Children's Center, a children's mental health treatment, research and training program affiliated with the College's Department of Psychology. I feel that I was highly successful in that position. When I assumed the job, Brewer-Porch had a staff of 30 and an annual budget of approximately \$500,000. When I left the Brewer-Porch directorship in 1997, there were over 240 staff members and the Center had an annual budget of over \$5 million, with over 90% of these funds coming from external contracts and grants. At the Center I was responsible for all clinical, budgetary, personnel, and facilities management. I initiated, negotiated and managed all external contracts and grants and was responsible for development efforts which resulted in the addition of three new buildings to the Brewer-Porch campus, considerable expansion of existing services, and addition of new programs. Presentations in support of these development efforts numbered in the hundreds, with audiences ranging from the Governor and the Alabama Legislature to local civic clubs. I was also responsible for the overall "vision" for the Brewer-Porch program and succeeded in transforming the Center from a program focused on the provision of inpatient services to one with a multi-modal array of inpatient, outpatient, and community-based services. I also initiated undergraduate and graduate training programs at Brewer-Porch in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, business, nursing, counseling, social work, occupational therapy, family practice, and special education for students at the University of Alabama and other institutions. Throughout my years as Executive Director of Brewer-Porch Children's Center, I was also an active and productive faculty member in the Department of Psychology. I ascended the ranks from Assistant Professor to Professor, published, taught both undergraduate and graduate classes, directed thesis and dissertation projects, served as Acting Director of the Department's Psychology Clinic for a period of time, coordinated the Department's highly regarded doctoral specialty in Clinical Child Psychology for several years, and co-authored an NIMH Training Grant. I was also involved in faculty governance and service activities beyond the departmental level. I served on both the Faculty Senate and the Graduate Council and also served on a large number of University committees, including the Committee on Resources and Priorities and the Campus Master Plan Committee. I also served on a number of internal program review and chair search committees. Outside of the University, I demonstrated my administrative and interpersonal abilities through service as President of a national mental health organization (Association of Psychiatric Outpatient Centers of America), as Chair of the Psychology Licensing Board of Alabama, and as a member of the American Psychological Association's Committee on Accreditation.

In 1997, I was honored when my colleagues in the Psychology Department asked me to serve as Chair of that department. The Psychology Department at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa has 28 faculty members, over 700 undergraduate majors, and is both the largest undergraduate major and the largest doctoral program at the University. As Chair of that department, I negotiated with and hired nine new faculty members, including an endowed chair, wrote a proposal that received a highly competitive internal enhancement award, facilitated a 300% increase in the Department's research grant receipts, and

increased the diversity of both the faculty and graduate students. My regular responsibilities as Chair included curricular planning at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, performance evaluation of faculty and staff, dealing with student problems, and negotiation/problem solving with the Dean's office and central administration on issues ranging from curriculum, classroom space and start-up money, to funds for temporary instructors. I believe that I was highly successful in dealing with the challenges inherent in being a department chair and that this experience was highly relevant training for subsequent administrative positions.

In August 2003, I assumed the position of Dean of the School of Arts & Letters at North Georgia College & State University (NGCSU) in Dahlonega, GA. NGCSU has approximately 5,000 undergraduate students and 500 graduate students. The School of Arts & Letters is the largest academic unit at NGCSU, with approximately 100 faculty members, and it generates approximately 50% of the University's total credit hours. There I had academic, fiscal, and administrative responsibility for undergraduate programs in the areas of English, History, Foreign Languages, Mathematics, Computer Science, Music, Visual Arts, Theater, Psychology, Sociology, and Philosophy. The School of Arts & Letters also has a master's program in Community Counseling and cooperates with the School of Education in offering MEd programs in a number of fields. I feel that I was highly successful in my time at NGCSU. I facilitated the addition of several academic programs, including a minor in philosophy and a major in computer information science; "streamlined" the core curriculum in several areas; planned, funded, and constructed a computerized language laboratory; began the formation of financial "support groups" in the areas of music and visual arts; identified and secured additional off-campus space for music and theater rehearsal and construction/storage; began the accreditation process for the graduate counseling program; increased undergraduate scholarship awards and faculty travel funds; and began the process of forming separate departments of Foreign Languages (formerly part of Language & Literature with English) and Computer Science (currently part of Mathematics). In addition to these discrete accomplishments, I also negotiated successfully with central administration for the resources necessary to run the School of Arts & Letters and effectively managed these resources, hired twelve new faculty members, conducted tenure and promotion reviews, reviewed and revised School policies and procedures, and engaged in the numerous other development and administrative activities required of a Dean. I received very positive feedback regarding my efforts both from my supervisors and from the department heads and faculty members whom I served.

In July, 2005, I became Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at Appalachian State University (ASU) in Boone, NC. Despite the success I enjoyed at NGCSU, I felt somewhat limited by the size of the institution and the limited number of graduate programs and took advantage of the opportunity to move to a larger university with more graduate offerings. ASU has approximately 14,000 undergraduate students and almost 1,500 graduate students and is rated by US News & World Report as the 12th best comprehensive university in the South. The College of Arts & Sciences at ASU has approximately 360 tenure-track faculty members and 4,000 majors in its 16 academic departments and offers over 200,000 student credit hours per academic year (52% of the University total). The College offers over 100 academic majors and minors and over 25 graduate degrees. In addition to academic departments in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, the College also administers a number of inter-disciplinary degree programs (environmental science, viticulture, sustainable development, women's studies, global studies), an animal care facility, an electron microscopy facility, and an observatory and science out-reach center. The total college budget is in excess of \$30 million. Since coming to ASU, I have provided leadership in the addition of a number of new academic programs (including four new master's programs) and the revision of several others, guided the renovation/construction of three academic buildings, expanded distance education program offerings, hired seventy new faculty (including six department chairs), and assisted in the development of a new general education curriculum. I think both the Provost and the department chairs and faculty in my College would judge my efforts to have been highly successful.

Despite the success I have experienced at Appalachian State, two factors have prompted me to apply for the Provost's position at The University of Southern Mississippi. First, I miss the intellectual challenges and excitement of a research university. Although Appalachian State has a number of excellent master's programs, the scholarship and intellectual climate that comes with a focus on the highest level of education and research is largely missing. I would very much like to again work at a university in which graduate level training and scholarship is given equal weight with undergraduate education. Secondly, my wife and I have found that we really miss the west Alabama/east Mississippi region, particularly the life-long friends that we have in that area.

While I am not familiar with the specifics of the current situation at The University of Southern Mississippi, I believe that at most universities the scholarship and teaching of the faculty and the performance of the students are critical to the success of the institution and that the primary duty of the Provost is to promote both. To accomplish this, the Provost (in conjunction with the President) must have an inspiring vision of the academic future of the institution and must be an effective manager of the resources necessary to bring this vision about. Teaching, scholarship and service must be defined in such a way that they have validity for each individual discipline and faculty member. In developing these definitions and setting academic priorities at The University of Southern Mississippi, I would depend heavily on input from the faculty of the academic departments. I think that carefully defining the missions and expectations in individual departments is absolutely imperative, but that this is a collaborative effort between faculty and administration, rather than something that happens from the “top down.”

My conception of the role of Provost also recognizes the critical importance of development efforts. I have been active and successful in obtaining external support in the past and would expect to be equally successful in this role at Southern Miss. I would plan on a major commitment of my time and energy in soliciting external dollars and would ensure that such donations would enhance all areas of the University.

In closing this letter, I would like to discuss my interpersonal style. I am, by nature, a direct and informal person. I think that such a style is ideally suited to the demands of the Provost’s position. I have been effective in dealing with a wide variety of people both within and outside the academy and think of myself as first and foremost a “people person”. My interpersonal and administrative abilities, my disciplinary training in psychology and my experience as a department chair and dean will allow me to appreciate the breadth of the Provost’s responsibilities at The University of Southern Mississippi, to understand what the university’s goals can and should be, and to develop effective strategies to accomplish these goals. I have attached to this letter my vita, a brief statement of my leadership philosophy, and the names and contact information for five professional references. I look forward to hearing from you and wish you the best in your search.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert D. Lyman". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Robert D. Lyman, Ph.D.