

April 5, 2017

Dear Presidential Search Committee:

With both a smile and great enthusiasm I submit this application for the position of President of Texas Southmost College. With my background and experiences I believe I could do an excellent job for the Board, for the College and its students, and for the broader South Texas community. Kindly let me explain how.

To begin, I'm well acquainted with Brownsville and South Texas. As some of you may know already, for a decade and a half I worked at UTB/TSC as professor, program director, radio talk show host, Academic Senate President, and Vice President for Partnership Affairs. My wife and I love South Texas, raised our kids there, and continue to have many good friends in Brownsville. Whereas outsiders might require substantial time to understand the Valley, its rhythms and culture and organizations and key players, I can get to work for you immediately, bringing together the people, businesses, and agencies we'll need to work with in order to move the College forward.

You're looking for a person with considerable senior administrative experience, someone with the ability to work well with an elected board. Here again I believe I can help you. As Vice President I headed the TSC District Office and was the institution's point of contact with the Board of Trustees. My responsibilities included organizing Board and Partnership Committee meetings, retreats, and workshops. I conducted Trustee elections, represented the institution at meetings of the Texas Association of Community Colleges, and assisted the Trustees and President with lobbying efforts in Austin. I oversaw a total annual budget of \$50 million and an operating budget of over \$12 million, and was responsible for tax rate setting, insurance, facilitating audits, issuing debt, managing scholarships and endowments, real estate purchases, and the leasing of campus properties. As Vice President I was also responsible for campus master planning, the Physical Plant, historical renovations, and for numerous capital construction projects totaling some \$200 million. As a result of this experience I am intimately familiar with the campus and its operations. I understand the history and functioning of the TSC Board, its role and its institutional importance, and am knowledgeable about matters affecting the Texas Southmost College District. Indeed, my greatest pleasure as VP was getting to know the members of the Board personally, and having the privilege to work with them on a range of projects.

Since 2010 I've worked at San Diego State University, the bulk of that time as Dean of the Campus at SDSU's Imperial Valley Campus. SDSU-IV is a Hispanic Serving Institution of some 800 full-time-equivalent students (1000 headcount), many of them first-generation, their demographics and educational needs almost identical to those found among TSC's students. The position of Dean of the Campus is unlike that of any of SDSU's other academic deans, carrying with it responsibility for the full range of campus operations: academic programs and program development, assessment and evaluation, faculty and staff, student services, library, physical plant and facilities, fundraising, alumni and community relations, government relations, and oversight of a multi-million dollar operating budget. In other words, my responsibilities were almost identical to those of the president of a small college or university, giving me the sort of top-level administrative experience you're looking for.

You make clear that TSC will be looking to its new President for the strategic vision necessary to develop new academic programs and enhance existing programs. My three most important projects undertaken here in California, the Imperial Valley University Partnership, the Center for Sustainable Energy, and Project AMCO are discussed in detail in the accompanying document where I address your list of desired characteristics for the next TSC President. These signature programs are definitely worth a look, and I ask that you kindly review that document in detail.

Beyond those three highly successful projects, let me give you a sense of what I've done in the areas of programmatic visioning and implementation. Some of you may recall how, as a faculty member at UTB/TSC, I was the architect for the Dual Language Certification Program, designed to give our students recognition for their bilingual competencies. Here in California, working with senior staff from the Small Business Administration, I brought to campus a Small Business Development Center, providing us a mechanism for bringing in additional students and resources, creating an environment conducive to community-based learning and internships, and ensuring that our academic programs are responsive to local employment needs. I worked with our faculty to establish the Borderlands Institute, realizing their decades-long dream of having an institutional center of gravity for academic and cultural activities related to our transnational region. In the ongoing effort to expand our inventory of undergraduate and graduate programs, I worked with the SDSU main campus to put us on the path to bringing the Bachelor of Social Work to the Imperial Valley, with our local community college to create a fully articulated four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing, with the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California to lay the foundation for jointly-offered renewable energy classes and ultimately an engineering program, and with the Instituto Universitario de Investigación Ortega y Gasset in Mexico City to envision a joint masters-level program in the area of Educational Leadership.

It's clear your next President should be someone who can foster external connections, a vital skill if the College is to serve the community and fulfill its mission. I'm certain I can help you here as well. As I'm sure my references will attest, as Dean I was constantly out in the community promoting our institution, securing input, creating the public-public and public-private linkages that redounded to the benefit of our campus and the community. To give but one example, our stunningly successful *Taste of the Valley* annual gala was purposely designed with the goals of promoting our university, showcasing local businesses, providing our community with a wonderful evening of entertainment, and raising significant scholarship dollars for our students. As the institution's senior administrator, I take seriously indeed the need to be actively engaged in the community. But of equal importance is the need to be a presence on campus, continuously engaging students, faculty, and staff, attending campus events, participating in campus activities, helping foster and maintain that delightful, ethereal thing we call campus culture.

These are some of the experiences and emphases I hope to bring to TSC as President: the ability to identify new areas of excellence, an entrepreneurial approach to pursuing the partnerships and dollars necessary to achieve that excellence, and the capacity to market institutional accomplishments to increase enrollment and enhance student success. I offer you a demonstrated record of success in program development and implementation, in community engagement and fundraising, and a career-long dedication to internationalism and diversity. I also speak Spanish. Finally, I know TSC and its community well, and have considerable experience working directly with the Board of Trustees.

Many, many thanks for your interest and attention. I would love to return to Brownsville and ask that you kindly give my application your serious consideration. Please contact me directly if you would like additional information or have questions regarding my candidacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Pearson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David E. Pearson, Ph.D.