

April 30, 2017

Dear Search Committee:

Please accept this letter and other required materials in application for the position of President at Texas Southmost College. For more than two decades, I have developed my administrative and leadership skills with the goal of becoming a community college CEO. Based on the Desirable Characteristics document and what I know about Texas Southmost College, my skills are a great fit with the college as well as the community.

Throughout my career, I have hit the ground running to quickly begin making significant contributions to the organizations in my key leadership roles. I have been tasked with several big challenges and, frankly, have succeeded where others have failed.

Following are a few examples:

- Given an underperforming division, within less than a year I engaged my faculty/staff and developed an energized and productive team
- Developed a sequence of course scheduling where certificates are “stackable” and are aligned with related degrees, providing multiple opportunities for students to start and finish with their degree, ultimately increasing completion
- Working closely with faculty and content experts, I restructured curricula and updated labs to better serve our changing business and industry environment
- Administrative team-co-lead for the \$15 million construction project of a new campus
- Identified a donor and established a \$212,000 endowment fund
- Instrumental in the DOL grant application which resulted in a \$2.7 million TAACCCT award
- Established and funded with industry support program-specific scholarships
- Improved tutoring by working with the Department of Success and Completion in the Instructional Service area and increased program specific tutoring opportunities
- Co-led the development of the Weekend College by offering a structured class schedule on Saturdays only to provide students with an opportunity to start/complete a program of study
- Increased interventions that would assist at-risk students by encouraging and supporting faculty usage of the Early Alert Referral System
- Revitalized several of our program advisory boards, bringing broader industry perspectives to our workforce programs and the college
- Led an ongoing county-wide joint college-school district strategic planning process resulting in smoother student transitions from high school career and technical programs to college
- Implemented the University of Houston-Downtown (UH-D) 2+2+1 partnership, which will lead to scholarships for HCC business students to obtain a baccalaureate and master degree in Business Administration in a 5-year span
- Implemented a UH-D embedded advisor (unfunded by the university), specially targeting the completion of an A.A. in Business Administration at HCC and provide a seamless transfer to UH-D
- Led the development of and successfully launched an Early College Academy focused on information technology and digital media

In order to improve the quality experience across the college, we must foster a compelling work/learn environment and systematically employ analytic measures to improve performance for all stakeholders. Analyzing student and program data is a strength of mine, and I believe is essential to the success of the college. We should be as data-informed as possible, at all times, to help ensure that we are guiding our students and college stakeholders in the right direction. I enthusiastically promote instructional collaboration and analysis of program data across programs and instructional units, as well as throughout the college. Another strategy, I implement, to improve the quality experiences across the college for our students is to work with department chairs and faculty to promote professional development as part of their goals, as we continually strive to improve the quality of our instruction.

When incorporating a vision, which will bring change to an organization, we must be clear about the future we want to create for the community. For example, at an off-site campus location I used to oversee, we changed from a narrow perspective of offering only limited CE classes to an abundance mentality of offering successfully to the community we serviced academic transfer courses, increased CE class offerings/workforce programs, corporate training, provided comprehensive student support services and constructed a new college campus. In the creation and fulfillment of this vision, I engaged businesses, ISD's, college faculty/administration/staff and community leaders to identify, market, and develop academic instructional programs to meet the needs of the regional/state industry. In addition, I established a Community Advisory Group (CAG) and maintained a 71% participation of 48 members to help plan for the construction of the new campus and sustain an environment responsive to the academic and service needs of its residents. It is worth mentioning during this time span, I carried out the ADELANTE Senior Day, which was an outreach recruitment effort designed to recruit primarily minority, at-risk and/or first generation senior high school students with the purpose of exposing these students to attainable higher educational opportunities as well as to simplify their transition from high school to college. During the last four years of implementing this program, 560 students had participated with approximately 30% of these high school seniors enrolled to college.

In these and many other projects, I enjoyed working with faculty, staff, students, and community members to create vision, then see the work through to completion. I have successfully worked with a Board of Directors, educational leaders, CEO's, community members, and government officials because I am committed to working with stakeholders to understand their needs as well as engage them in finding solutions. I strive always to "seek first to understand, then be understood" (Covey) and have handled very difficult meetings, turning combative conditions into productive outcomes while preserving or even strengthening relationships in the process. Being bilingual and bi-cultural, I understand how to work with diverse communities to build better connections and find new college partnership opportunities.

I also endeavor to be perceptive and sensitive about people and situations. I truly appreciate the differences and challenges that are brought to my attention for organizational improvement. In each case, I assess a problem from a variety of perspectives before determining the best course of action. Some of my colleagues consider me a valued peer-mentor, and they frequently seek my advice. My suggestions reflect a thoughtful, measured approach to problem solving, as well as a fundamental commitment to student success and the highest ethical standards.

As it pertains to organizational stewardship, I work with my supervisors, department chairs, faculty, and staff to review and optimize department budgets and prioritize program needs. We aim to become more streamlined and directly apply available resources to where they are most needed. In other words, I work with my teams to leverage our resources. In addition, I work to grow our outreach efforts in our communities in order to share the great opportunities available to them at the college and garner their support.

At the end of the day, our community colleges must serve our external communities while creating strong community of learners on campus—students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Charles Kendall Adams once said: "No student ever attains very eminent success by simply doing what is required of him: it is the amount and excellence of what is over and above the required that determines the greatness of the ultimate distinction." This is certainly true of leaders as well. I am committed to bringing Texas Southmost College my best every day to build the kind of college community that fosters ever-greater student success.

Thank you for reviewing my qualifications. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Best Regards,

Jesus Roberto Rodriguez, Ph.D.