

April 30, 2017

Search Committee
Texas Southmost College
80 Fort Brown
Brownsville, Texas 78520
956-295-3600

Dear Search Committee:

I am pleased to apply for the position of President at Texas Southmost College and I am formally submitting this cover letter as well as all other documentation to establish my candidacy.

Please allow me the opportunity to demonstrate how my academic studies and richly diverse professional administrative/leadership work experience have prepared me to serve successfully as your President by bringing a new level of energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to widen the doorway to the educational opportunities offered to Texas Southmost College students.

The mission of a community college continues to be a comprehensive one; encompassing undergraduate studies, articulated transfers between institutions, developmental education, continuing education, workforce programs, closing the gap, and serving as a key resource to meet a wide variety of needs within the community. We can achieve this by building on current strengths and embracing emerging technologies, making the college the beacon of hope and resource for the community it serves. Within this vision, we must understand the importance of strengthening our working relationships with our surrounding high schools, area businesses, local churches, community members, public servants and other community connections. Only by strengthening these ties can we better understand the needs of our community and our role in assisting them. In addition, we need to educate our community about education so they are more apt to embrace the higher learning opportunities available to them, thus enabling us to address their needs better.

As I move forward in my career, I am in search of an institution that places student success at the core of its mission, has clearly defined values, a place where I will have the opportunity to use my skills, and be in a position to enrich significantly the community I serve. After reviewing your literature for this position as well as your website, I believe Texas Southmost College holds, as I do, the mission of community colleges close to its heart. Therefore, it is my honor to apply for President at Texas Southmost College.

I am a first generation, cross-cultural, and bilingual student, who is keenly aware of the importance of outreach efforts and proper program development, particularly for a diversified student population. As demonstrated in my vitae, I have a very rich and diverse professional administrative/leadership work experience. I have dealt with strategic planning, curriculum, institutional effectiveness, community outreach with culturally diverse populations, student services, workforce training, international trade, construction, economic development and

teaching in the continuum from elementary to the university level. In addition, I have proven myself as a great team builder, an exceptional problem solver, and a successful innovator. I have worked effectively with elected and recruited Boards of Directors as well as being part of institutional leadership teams to manage organizations' annual working budgets, development of academic programs, goal orientation, policies, procedures, organizational parameters, and administration. I have also worked in México, representing the maquiladora (manufacturing) industry ensuring compliance with local, state, national, and international regulations governing this industry. In addition, I am able to implement the valuable assets needed for strengthening and enriching academic programs and student support services as well as other activities with a proactive attitude, ingenuity, clear and transparent communication, strong skills in organization, including planning, coordination, facilitation of interaction with internal/external partners, data collection/analysis, academic research, and business administrative training. I am committed to professional faculty and staff development leading to innovation, academic programs, and student success.

In my tenure as Dean, Business Center of Excellence at Houston Community College I enhanced our programs to support student success by developing structured schedules for our Business programs. This sequencing of courses provide students with reliable and consistent course scheduling for several Business degrees and certificates programs, all helping students plan both their academic and personal lives better while at HCC. We have incorporated an "embedded" University of Houston-Downtown academic advisor specifically targeting the completion of an AA in Business Administration at HCC and transfer to University of Houston-Downtown. This partnership will also lead HCC business students into an even better opportunity in the future; a 2+2+1 cost-effective pathway whereby University of Houston-Downtown provides financial assistance through scholarships for business students to obtain their bachelor and master degrees in Business in a five year span. In addition, we received our accreditation for our Accounting, Business Technology, Business Management, Marketing and International Business programs from the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). This achievement makes HCC the only community college in the Gulf Coast Region with such an accreditation and one of only three in Texas. We are collaborating with our ISD's, the City of Houston, Harris County, community organizations, Chambers of Commerce and individual companies to help us define incentives to maximize community/business partnerships that support growth and development with our communities.

As Dean for the Career and Technical Education/Advanced Technology Center at Butler Community College, I streamlined division processes and procedures, as well as focused on strengthening community partnerships. Community outreach included convening monthly meetings with USD's Superintendents representing 10 school districts, helping to establish an alliance of information technology companies to build up the academic curriculum to support the IT industry for the greater Wichita area, and hosting biannual college industry advisory meetings. I was responsible for development, implementation, and supervision of programs/curriculum/instruction for 37 Associate Degrees, 22 certificates, corporate training, co-leading a \$2.7 million DOL grant, and administer a \$3.5 million division budget. In addition, I was able to provide many more options to Butler students by helping to establish individual articulation and transfer agreements with other state institutions of higher education.

As Dean/Director at Lone Star College-System, I provided the leadership with strategic planning, academic development, evaluation, and improvement for instructional areas, student services, business operations and general daily operations of the college Continue Education division and LSC-Conroe Center. I managed to increase unduplicated enrollments at the LSC-Conroe Center by approximately 25% in the time span of 30 months. I engaged businesses, ISDs, and community leaders to identify and develop academic program needs. For example, I successfully worked with community focus groups to establish two new CE programs (HTI+ and Automotive); the latter has now evolved into a linked credit program. Additionally, in an 18-month period, I identified, developed and administered a corporate contract-testing program with a nationally recognized company. Over 1,500 candidates enrolled in this program with a 90% successful job placement rate. I led the workforce development, adult literacy and community services activities at the LSC-North Harris campus and four off site locations. 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 North Montgomery County residents. Furthermore, 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, approximately 560 students had participated with approximately 30% of these high school seniors registering for college.

My time as a legislative aide at the state capitol taught me the intricacies of the Texas State legislative procedures and courses of action required to establish public policy and acquire funding. As Director for the Title V Co-op grant at Sul Ross State University-RGC, I oversaw a Math and Science Teacher Education Program and managed grant activity budget. While working as a graduate assistant at the University of Texas at Austin, I assisted department professors on academic matters and helped build partnerships with other academics institutions. As an SBDC Certified Business Development Specialist, I provided general counseling and training in areas of business administration to a rural nine county area in Southwest Texas.

As Executive Director for an economic development organization, I contributed significantly in submitting a regional grant application that led to a Federal Enterprise Zone designation. I was able to use conflict resolution, effective communication, and interpersonal skills to identify common attainable goals in order to refocus the community's energy as well as resources and move away from an isolation perspective to the overall county's economic development needs. It was through my coordination of a well-organized five county grassroots effort, several town hall meetings, coordination with several government/elected public officials and chambers of commerce that my team was able to succeed.

As Executive Director for a Maquiladora (manufacturing) Association located in the Texas-México border, I served, promoted, and represented at the local, state, national, and international levels approximately 32,000 direct employees working for the companies affiliated to this organization while insuring compliance with the local, state, national, and international regulations governing this entity. I served as one of the national consultants to the National Council of the Maquiladora Industry in México to help advise, support, and strengthen the ties

between international manufacturing investors and the Mexican government. As an active member of this national council, I was able to influence local, state, and national policy to accommodate international and national interest in order to provide mutual advantages for the diverse parties involved. With this extensive background in international trade and a multicultural perspective, I was able to create the needed workforce training programs as well as offer the educational seminars for servicing the professional needs of the industry.

Teaching in the Eagle Pass ISD, particularly with the academically disadvantage and marginalized migrant students, provided me the opportunity to apply a broad knowledge of educational instruction and methodologies. I have also taught at the community college and university level sharing my knowledge of international business with undergraduate students. I have always tried to maintain a classroom environment conducive to students developing skills in analytical thinking, interpersonal communication and sound judgment for interaction when working in a group project.

My blending of academics and business as well as having a clear understanding in how they interrelate informs my passionate dedication to helping students succeed while also strengthening our services to our community. I am a firm believer in the importance and power of education, service learning and volunteer work. It is also my belief that institutions of higher education have the responsibility in providing a quality education to all students. Embracing this ideal gives us the difficult but honorable mission of educating all students that walk through the doors of our institutions. While access remains a critical facet, student success must be our focus. Truly, hard work and commitment are required to provide the quality education needed to power the economic engines of our local, regional, and national economies.

I am grateful for your serious consideration. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Jesús Roberto Rodríguez, Ph.D.