

April 15, 2009

Dean Douglas Blaze
College of Law
279 George C. Taylor
Knoxville, TN 37996-1810

Dear Dean Blaze:

I am writing to apply for the position of Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Having served in the interim role since August 1, 2008, I am eager to accept the challenge of the permanent position.

My administrative experience began when I accepted the headship of the Department of Classics in 1991. I served in that role until 2000, with one year spent as interim head of the newly formed Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures. In 2000, I became an associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences, with the particular portfolio of academic personnel and faculty issues. After nearly four years in that role, the associate vice chancellor/vice provost position became available, and I remained in that position, assuming the title of Senior Vice Provost in 2006, until last August. This diversity of administrative experience has given me a comprehensive view of the university as well as a wealth of experience in hiring and faculty development, personnel policy and procedures, diversity initiatives, budget and planning, and academic programming and program review.

I had planned to return to my position as Professor of Classics as of last August when Interim Chancellor Simek asked me to accept the position of Interim Provost. It had never been my intention to pursue administration for the entirety of my career, and teaching and research continue to attract me. I believe that academic administrators must strive to retain a faculty perspective, and I have continued, to the modest extent possible, to engage in teaching, research, and professional service during the years of my full time administrative experience. It would certainly be reasonable to ask why, at this point, I am interested in becoming Provost.

There are a number of ways to answer that question, but fundamentally, I enjoy the challenge of being in a position to move the university towards greater excellence in an admittedly difficult time. The quality of the university has improved markedly in the past decade on a number of measures, and administration, working with faculty, students, and staff, has the power either to further this movement or inhibit it. While we face a number of challenges, I believe that the potential exists here to improve substantially; I want to be

a part of the team that moves us forward. As an internal candidate, I bring to the position an institutional loyalty and memory of 28 years standing. My focus has been to improve this university rather than to seek an administrative career. I also understand the importance of looking outside for new ideas and approaches. A new Chancellor has come in with a wealth of experience and ideas. I am also pursuing opportunities for professional development such as the ACE Institute for New Chief Academic Officers in order to become acquainted with best practices at other institutions.

In my position as Vice Provost, I was given a wide range of responsibilities, basically anything the Vice Chancellor and Chancellor assigned to me. I had the opportunity to work to improve processes for faculty hiring, develop the retreat for deans and department heads, improve new faculty orientation and initiate other new faculty welcome activities, work on the *Faculty Handbook* and the evaluation manual, put in place more standardized processes for tenure and promotion, work on the opportunity provided by the Geier consent decree and on planning for the post-Geier period, initiate (with Barbara Dewey) a women's administrator lunch group, and in general, create an office charged with what we now call 'faculty affairs' that will persist and improve long beyond my tenure in office.

As Interim Provost, I have worked with the Vice Provosts, Deans, Directors, and other staff to pursue an agenda based on certain core convictions. We must continue to be ambitious for UTK as the public research institution in Tennessee. We must aspire to be a great research university, to hire and retain the very best faculty, to offer excellent academic programs, and to recruit and retain the best students we can. As Provost, I want to work with the excellent team already in place to develop programs, policies and procedures that will help us move aggressively forward in all of these areas.

Here are some of the key areas of focus I would pursue and the associated challenges:

1. Recent achievements and recognitions of our faculty, for example in grants and contracts and in external awards, show that we are hiring well and increasingly supporting faculty development. We face huge challenges in these tough times, especially in the area of compensation but also to make sure that UTK provides the kind of workplace that fosters a culture faculty excellence and satisfaction;
2. We are attracting excellent students at the undergraduate level. We have a good first year experience in place to help students succeed and persist into the second year. Our challenge now is to work on persistence to graduation, the provision of an excellent undergraduate experience, and maintaining the numbers of excellent faculty to teach students;
3. As a research university, we train the teachers, researchers, and professionals of the future. We must work to recruit and graduate high quality graduate students, improve funding for graduate students, and provide other support they need to become outstanding professionals;
4. Access and diversity initiatives must continue to be a high priority. We will continue to monitor our scholarship and recruitment activities to make sure that access to UTK is available to a diverse group highly qualified students. Through

- the Ready for the World initiative, we will continue to work with groups around campus to improve our international and intercultural awareness of our students and to improve the campus climate for people from all backgrounds;
5. Finally, it is incumbent upon us to provide excellent services to the constituencies we serve. We must always seek ways to streamline administration, improve processes, and examine best practices at our peers and aspirational peers.

Please let me know if you require further information from me. I am delighted to have the opportunity to apply for this position and, I hope, to continue working with the campus community to make the University of Tennessee a place of academic excellence.

Sincerely,

Susan D. Martin
Interim Provost and
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs