

March 23, 2023

Ms. Elizabeth Pierre  
Chair of the Board of Supervisors  
University of Louisiana System

Dear Chair Pierre:

I write to submit my application for the position of president at Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU). My 31 years of experience in public higher education have afforded me the knowledge and skills needed to be successful as this institution's 15th president. Southeastern is home to me. I was born and raised in Tangipahoa and chose to attend SLU, following in both my father's and older brother's footsteps. As an undergraduate student, my first jobs at SLU were in the Office of Public Information and the Registrar's Office. In those roles, the seed was planted for my career in higher education. Upon graduation, I started my formal journey in higher education as a financial aid counselor with the university. During those early years at SLU, I was fortunate to collaborate with many career professionals who provided me with opportunities that laid the foundation for the career I have today.

I have been privileged to serve in administrative capacities at large, public flagship universities and medium-sized regional institutions. I am a visionary leader keenly focused on results and have direct experience guiding universities through challenging circumstances and once-in-a-lifetime events. For example, Hurricane Katrina at Louisiana State University, the COVID-19 pandemic at Kent State University, and various challenges at the University of Florida have required bold, innovative solutions, creativity, and resilience. These experiences have sharpened those vital leadership traits in strategic and decisive decision-making, capacity-building, and communication. With these experiences, I believe the time is right for me to "lion up" and return home to SLU and use my expertise and knowledge to advance the institution that helped make me who I am today.

My personal and professional philosophy is: *You cannot remain as you are forever*. This ethos drives me to challenge mediocrity and the status quo and push my institution to excel in today's dynamic educational marketplace and local, regional, and national economies.

The leader for the future must make a fundamental choice: advance the institution forward through proactive design and planning or sit idly by and allow the institution to get swept up in the natural momentum and fall behind. My experience with national flagships and AAU institutions has allowed me to participate in and influence national conversations around financial aid optimization and leveraging the student experience through the eyes of alums - all to help advance our institutional mission.

As president, I will challenge the status quo and advance a culture of excellence and improvement by embracing the opportunities and challenges associated with the institution. I have demonstrated an aptitude for sound judgment and effectiveness in enrollment, philanthropy, and fiscal matters. My ability to foster a culture of continuous improvement and efficient stewardship of university resources is necessary, particularly in times of constrained resources. Above all, I am an individual with a desire to sustain and encourage a highly collaborative environment with faculty, senate, and academic colleges for educational and operational excellence, impactful outreach, and substantive economic impact.

Higher education is rapidly changing, and competition is intensifying. University presidents must wear many hats – fundraiser, student-centric leader, enrollment strategist, and chief storyteller. As a result, a presidential vision must include a plan for excellence in teaching, research, and technology. It must forefront interactions with students, parents, alums, and business leaders. The vision must also build a reputation for student success. In today's competitive market, students have choices regarding higher education. We must ensure our curricula are cutting-edge and responsive to student and societal demands. As president, I will ensure that all facilities and services provide the best opportunity for engagement throughout the student lifecycle, from early outreach to loyal alums.

Through my research and experience, how a president responds to the following critically essential issues will determine the degree to which the institution will flourish in a rapidly changing higher education landscape.

**Recruiting and Retaining Top Talent:** Successful universities must invest in human capital. Faculty and staff serve our students and, thus, the region and state. The people make SLU special, and the president must recognize and value the importance of the work faculty and staff provide for SLU's continued success. The president must secure top talent for the institution and provide an inclusive educational environment that supports academic freedom. Shared governance is vital to moving the institution forward. And it is only achieved by creating and maintaining a trustful relationship with the faculty senate. At the University of Florida, I serve on the president's cabinet and as a critical provost leadership team member. As an associate provost, I work directly with deans, department chairs, and faculty on academic initiatives, such as curriculum management, course delivery modality, academic calendar, transfer equivalencies, and academic partnerships with community colleges, including but not limited to articulation agreements.

A president must understand all constituents' needs and work with them to find a solution to advance the academic mission. The faculty is critical to the institution's academic mission, and they create learning environments that motivate students to pursue their dreams in STEM, education, business, or the arts. Faculty are researching and engaging with our constituents to address the challenges facing our parish, region, and state. Faculty and staff are supporting and

educating leaders of tomorrow who will compete in the global economy and be ambassadors to the SLU brand.

**Enrollment Declines:** The enrollment cliff is here, and every university recruits the same students. The marketplace demands a university understand its mission, vision, path, and clientele. To have a competitive edge means doing due diligence to understand the competition and learn from their successes and failures. Knowing the ethos means we understand campus culture and our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, priorities, and traditions.

A president must require a shifting mindset concerning enrollment. Traditionally, enrollment was a cost center but now is seen as an investment incubator with quantifiable returns. With increased competition, universities must look at alternate enrollment pathways that increase accessibility to posts secondary credentials and increases institutional revenue. As an accomplished enrollment strategist, I can help the university stabilize and grow enrollment while creating lifelong learning pathways for all -- students, alums, and the surrounding community. My experience in enrollment and developing alternate credential pathways help support the Louisiana Board of Regents' goal of "60% of working adults holding a degree or credential of value by the year 2030."

Additionally, a critical lens must be on increasing retention and closing the equity gap. At the University of Utah and Kent State University, I led the university's initiative to close that gap among underserved populations while increasing overall retention efforts. An institution can only change recruitment, retention, and graduation rates if faculty are involved intimately in this work. Faculty and students are at the core of our institution, and there is power in their collective voices. Diversity of thought and honest, transparent conversation can change campus culture, support enrollment, and move SLU to the next level of success.

**Access and Affordability:** Access to a state university should depend more on a student's ability, preparation, and enthusiasm than their family's income or circumstances. One of the president's primary responsibilities is to ensure the university has sufficient resources to fully realize the institution's enrollment potential while ensuring access and affordability remain uncompromised. Throughout my career, I have leveraged awarding of aid by creating process efficiencies through seamless navigation to students, thus increasing student satisfaction that positively impacted recruitment, retention, and graduation rates.

At the University of Utah, I increased need-based aid and supported the increased enrollment of low-socioeconomic students. Financial aid optimization resulted in the institution increasing total scholarship dollars awarded to students by 77% over five years. That increase enabled the university to leverage its state, federal, and institutional dollars more effectively, thus increasing all student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. And at Kent State, I reduced the discount rate and increased net tuition revenue without impacting overall enrollment.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** A bold and unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility is vital to achieving our institutional goals. This commitment includes building a culture of acceptance and inclusion by prioritizing, investing, and developing talent across the staff, faculty, and administrative ranks. At LSU, the University of Utah, and Kent State, I partnered with the chief diversity officer to attract underrepresented students to campus, develop programs and wraparound support services to help them succeed. Over five years at the University of Utah, the number of underrepresented students increased by more than 53% due to partnership and collaboration between the two offices. At Kent State University and the University of Florida, I developed a similar partnership and saw applications and admits of students of color increase by over 34% and 25%, respectively. As I think of the changing demographics in our state, region, and nation, strategies focused on underrepresented populations are critical to the success of the institution but also to providing a rich learning environment for students.

**Telling the Story:** As the chief storyteller for the institution, the president creates excitement and enthusiasm for SLU. The president must communicate the campus's core values, institutional priorities, and success metrics with authenticity and evidence. As the value of higher education is more scrutinized, we must tell our story as often as possible to as many as possible. We must convey that our faculty and students are among the best in the country and do so in a manner that reaches our target audiences in engaging and impactful ways that articulate how the institution changes lives and adds value to the campus, community, and region.

An intentional, coherent, and coordinated communication strategy is requisite for success in today's increasingly interconnected world. For example, at Kent State, I worked with the philanthropy and alumni engagement vice president in developing a scholarship narrative used across all academic areas and university divisions. By using data with student stories, we highlighted Kent State and increased philanthropic giving levels by 15%. To gain the attention and support of our legislators, we must demonstrate the work and its effect on constituents within their district and across the state. At the University of Utah and the University of Florida, I worked closely with legislative teams to tell the university's story about students and their impact on the region, state, and nation.

**Develop and Nurture Relationships with the Southeastern Community.** One of the most critical roles of the president is to work with the executive vice president and provost collaboratively, the President's Cabinet, the Council of Deans, the Academic Senate, faculty, and students to ensure the advancement of the institution's goals. SLU is positioned along the I-10 corridor and has a robust infrastructure ideal for collaboration and investment. SLU should be the economic driver of business innovation and education reform in the southeast region and state. I have served in progressively senior leadership roles in higher education across various types of institutions, resulting in an understanding of the opportunities afforded a state institution

and an appreciation for the challenges it will face moving forward. By working with various constituencies across campus communities, states, and the nation, I have learned the value of engaging with a wide range of stakeholders. If allowed to serve the SLU community, I will work closely with all campus community members, including business and education leaders, to advance the institution's goals together.

SLU has made significant accomplishments and has excellent aspirations leading to great opportunities. I have the breadth and depth of experience and vision required to propel SLU forward. As a two-time SLU alum, it would be an honor for me to serve as the 15th president of Southeastern Louisiana University. I am ready to "*Lion UP.*"

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Genco Parker, EdD

# Mary Genco Parker, EdD

## Overview

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**Higher education leader** with 31 years of experience in positions of progressive responsibility. Proven leader and well-versed in all areas of strategic enrollment management. Experienced in leading and developing teams to achieve elevated levels of productivity while delivering excellence. Impressive record of developing and implementing enrollment and retention strategies that are student and solution-focused. Effective in developing business and marketing plans to elevate the university brand and capture significant portions of market share. Exceptional rapport- and relationship-building skills with students, academic leaders, community members, and legislators to advance the institution's mission. Polished communicator talented in customizing conversation to address specific needs of the situation.

## Education

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Bachelor of Arts in History/Government, 1992  
Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Master of Education in Educational Counseling, 1996  
Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

Doctor of Education, Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management, 2018  
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA

Dissertation: *The Role of Financial Aid in Promoting Access to Completion*

## Administrative Leadership Positions

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**Vice President of Enrollment Management and Associate Provost** **2021–Present**  
University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

- Serve on President's Cabinet and Provost's Academic Leadership Team
- Function as chief enrollment officer, coordinating enrollment planning and policy for the university
- Coordinate university task force on alternate credentials
- Partnered with workforce development and University of Florida Online to align and promote partnerships with businesses to support enrollment pathways to the University of Florida
- Collaborated with vice president of university marketing and communication to develop a university-wide marketing and branding plan
- Partnered with the Alumni Association to develop the university's first nationwide alumni recruitment program
- Developed a relationship with Faculty Senate president to ensure Enrollment Management and Faculty Senate alignment
- Created relationships with the Chamber of Commerce and other community agencies to build stronger relationships with the University of Florida, thus enhancing the university's outreach efforts
- Enhanced university strategies to increase low-income student enrollment by 9% in 1 year and increase enrollment of underserved populations by 25% in 1 year
- Implemented a financial aid optimization study focused on meeting student enrollment and increasing net tuition revenue
- Implemented waitlisting for academic courses to support the goal of reducing time to degree

- Created a marketing strategy that won a Circle of Excellence award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)
- Member of the chief information officer's executive committee on data governance
- Created efficiencies in all enrollment areas by automating business processes to create a better student experience
- Developed a one-stop student service model including admissions, financial aid, registrar, and student accounts
- Initiated a university-wide task force to develop a 5-year comprehensive enrollment plan
- Serve on university committees, including the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee and the University of Florida Advancement Deans and Directors Development Council
- Serve as the articulation officer for the Florida Board of Governors
- Served on the executive team that assessed and overhauled the university's orientation program
- Partnered with the Honors College to manage all program recruitment and admissions
- Chaired the university's task force on campus tours, which led to the approval of a new welcome center

**Vice President of Enrollment Management**  
Kent State University, Kent, OH

**2019–2021**

- Served on President's Cabinet and Provost's Academic Leadership Team
- Developed partnerships with academic deans on all eight campuses to coordinate university recruitment and retention strategies
- Functioned as chief enrollment officer, coordinating enrollment planning and policy for the university
- Supervised the Office of Admissions, Financial Aid and Scholarships, Registrar, One Stop, and Enrollment Operations and Reporting
- Served as member of the university's executive budget committee, providing input and guidance on university budget development
- Met monthly with Faculty Senate president to ensure transparent and consistent dialogue on university enrollment goals
- Developed a financial aid optimization plan allowing the university to reduce its discount rate and increase net tuition revenue
- Served as member of coordinating team overseeing the university's Retention Task Force
- Developed and implemented a holistic admissions model for the university that increased the academic quality of the 1st-year class and the diversity in all classifications (e.g., race, geography, and socioeconomic status)
- Coordinated with academic colleges to use data and technology to better predict course demand, which resulted in reducing time to degree for students
- Developed a university-wide strategic enrollment plan SEM for the university that worked in coordination with the academic colleges
- Collaborated with vice president of university marketing and communication to develop a university-wide marketing and branding plan that worked in conjunction with the enrollment management marketing plan
- Developed a strategy to reduce reliance on dollars from tuition and fees to cover institutional scholarships by using a foundation-first strategy
- Coordinated with Academic Affairs and Finance and Administration to evaluate and adjust the mix of academic programs to ensure long-term financial viability
- Coordinated with Academic Affairs to develop academic drivers that enabled curriculum to align with market demand and student choice
- Responsible for all NCAA and MAC compliance with all Division 1 sports as related to admissions, registrar, and financial aid
- Reviewed and implemented a new business model in transfer processing that led to changes in how courses were articulated
- Developed the University Scholarship narrative for fundraising for the Office of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement and all academic colleges

- Worked with vice president of information technology and chief information officer to change campus culture to support a more data-informed decision-making process.
- Coordinated with chief information officer on development of a data governance structure for the university that resulted in a data dictionary to support accurate use of data across the campus
- Wrote the scholarship proposal for the emergency fund during COVID-19, which raised over \$1 million to support over 7,000 students
- Served as a member of the University Reopening Steering Committee, which was responsible for all decisions regarding the reopening of Kent State University during COVID-19

### **Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management**

**2011–2019**

University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah

- Functioned as chief enrollment officer, coordinating enrollment planning and policy for the university
- Implemented and executed strategic enrollment management plan throughout campus to coordinate student recruitment and retention
- Served as key member of the Provost Leadership Team, working on strategies to support Utah in becoming an Association of American Universities member
- Responsible for all NCAA and PAC12 compliance with all Division 1 sports as related to admissions, registrar, and financial aid
- Engaged in continuously reflective, analytically rigorous, and technically sophisticated dialogues with senior leadership about enrollment realities and possibilities
- Routinely analyzed data to shape strategic directions and make appropriate adjustments to an integrated and strategic enrollment effort that clearly identified and defined historical university enrollment patterns and forecasted trends in new student markets
- Led a task force that created a new scholarship process, enabling the university to leverage its institutional budget more effectively across campus
- Regularly assessed effectiveness of recruitment activities and financial aid programs and made appropriate adjustments to lead an effort that was continuously proactive and responsive to market forces and university needs
- Developed key summer strategies aiding in retention efforts and increased net tuition revenue for the campus
- Introduced and implemented a data warehouse strategy with the chief information officer to support enrollment management
- Cultivated a data-rich environment to establish and expand enrollment strategies
- Developed and implemented “Access U,” a transfer pathway program between the University of Utah and Salt Lake Community College
- Developed and implemented a holistic admissions model for the university that has increased the academic quality of the 1st-year class and diversity in all classifications (e.g., race, geography, socioeconomic status)
- Served as a member of the leadership team that developed the Utah Global Campus in South Korea
- Established a marketing and communication strategy that enhanced and increased enrollment of underserved student populations
- Cochaired a task force on student retention and graduation that led to implementation of key strategies
- Initiated a campus-wide movement around women’s enrollment
- Developed key strategies to support retention using financial aid
- Led reverse transfer initiative for the university at the state level
- Developed an international enrollment strategy for the university, coordinating with the Office of Global Education, Alumni, and the academic colleges
- Served on the Student Affairs Divisional Leadership Team and met regularly to strategize and develop divisional priorities



**Executive Director of Undergraduate Admissions & Student Aid**  
**Director of Student Aid and Scholarships**  
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

**2007–2011**  
**2004–2007**

Managed a staff of 60 full-time employees who recruit and admit all 1st-year students, transfer students, and international students as well as award all state, federal, and institutional aid totaling over \$200 million. Worked with an office budget of approximately \$4 million. Developed and expanded LSU market share regionally and nationwide, which resulted in an increase in admission applications over 20% and admitted students by 36%, with an overall increase in enrollment yield by 14%.

- Functioned as the chief enrollment officer and chief articulation officer and served as the liaison with the State Board of Regents Office
- Led and coordinated enrollment planning and policy for the university
- Developed data management strategies in Enrollment Management and established partnerships with academic units on campus to address institutional factors affecting student recruitment and enrollment
- Increased minority applications by 47% over 3 years
- Developed LSU's first comprehensive recruitment plan used campus wide
- Coordinated and implemented recruitment and retention goals for all senior colleges related to overall enrollment goals for the university
- Completed a comprehensive study assessing the effectiveness of institutional scholarships to enrollment goals of the university, leading to the development of new scholarship programs that are competitive in the marketplace but also generate revenue for the university
- Developed a strategic marketing and communication plan for the university based on recruitment goals in coordination with University Relations
- Coordinated a successful campaign to engage guidance counselors and parents in the recruitment process
- Had oversight of all state, federal, and institutional financial aid programs totaling over \$200 million
- Responsible for the development and implementation of admissions standards and strategic initiatives related to admissions and recruitment services
- Developed and implemented the merging of three offices into a one-stop shop enrollment center
- Created recruitment and yield programs for the university that supported enrollment goals
- Assessed programs at the end of year to determine effectiveness
- Increased transfer applications by 8% and admits by 9% in the last year in 2009
- Redefined admissions business practices to streamline the process for students and employees
- Developed innovative approaches to package scholarships and aid programs for targeted populations to enhance recruiting efforts
- Coordinated efforts with the Office of First Year Experience to develop programs that would increase the 1st- to 2nd-year retention rate of students
- Developed a comprehensive policy and procedures manual for the enrollment division
- Served as member of the Provost's Leadership Team for recruitment and retention
- Served on divisional leadership team and met regularly to strategize and develop divisional priorities
- Responsible for NCAA and SEC compliance with all Division 1 sports as related to admissions and financial aid
- Served as a member of the Enrollment Management Team that created the strategy for using federal aid and scholarships as a strategy to enroll, retain, and recruit students
- Developed and implemented a comprehensive scholarship system used by the entire campus to leverage scholarship dollars more effectively and efficiently
- Oversaw management and administration of state, federal, and institutional policies related to admissions and student aid
- Authored and implemented the first need-based aid scholarship at LSU—due to this program, the university has seen an increase in low-income students enrolling at LSU
- Redesigned the office and business processes to provide better customer service to all students, parents, guidance counselors, and other constituents
- Developed an extensive policies and procedures manual for federal aid and scholarships

- Oversaw and managed administration for all state scholarship programs totaling approximately \$45 million
- Oversaw and administered the Title IV federal aid programs totaling \$140 million
- Oversaw and managed the university's scholarship programs and budget of \$27 million
- Created and implemented a uniform application for all 1st-year students and continuing scholarships
- Developed campus-wide policy for awarding scholarships as related to recruitment and retention efforts
- Established university-wide scholarship award letter
- Developed outreach plan for the community outside of LSU allowing us to provide guidance to students and their parents regarding college choice and financing their education
- Developed partnerships with 100 Black Men and the Jack and Jill organization to expand the outreach program further to low-income and minority areas
- Assessed office operations and redefined all business processes to make it an easier process for students and a more efficient workflow
- Worked with the Admissions Office to use scholarships and federal aid in their recruitment strategies
- Changed the perception of the Student Aid and Scholarship Office from an office seen as "paper pushers" to an office that was part of the enrollment plan
- Wrote a grant proposal with the LSU Foundation after Hurricane Katrina that awarded the university \$3.3 million to help students impacted by the hurricanes

#### **Director of Financial Aid**

**2001–2004**

Reinhardt College, Atlanta, GA

- Provided oversight for all Title IV federal aid programs, university scholarships, and activities related to delivery of Title IV programs
- Responsible for strategic planning for Financial Aid as related to the overall enrollment planning of the institution
- Served as a key member of the Enrollment Management team
- Awarded and maintained the college's scholarships and fee exemption programs as well as the Georgia State financial aid programs
- Accountable for mandatory reporting on state, federal, and institutional levels as related to financial aid
- Developed and implemented a fully automated process for awarding federal and institutional aid

#### **Senior Consultant, Higher Education Division**

**1999–2001**

KPMG, Atlanta, GA

- Assessed operations for enrollment management, including admissions, financial aid, registrar, and bursar
- Identified areas of noncompliance in administering Title IV funds and issued recommendations for implementing a corrective action plan
- Reengineered processes in enrollment management for effective recruitment and retention strategies
- Developed training materials for institutions to increase staff knowledge of institutional and federal regulations
- Performed quality control reviews of university financial aid process and implemented changes based on findings
- Created and executed a project plan resulting in no material findings during a state audit and U.S. Department of Education federal review
- Responsible for development of new clientele
- Created proposal for higher education services provided by KPMG

**Interim Director of Admissions & Financial Aid**  
**Director of Financial Aid**  
**Assistant Director of Financial Aid**  
Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA

1992–1999

- Responsible for strategic planning for the Enrollment Services Division, which included Admissions, Financial Aid, and Orientation
- Served as key member of the university's Enrollment Management team
- Ensured overall office compliance by instituting periodic internal reviews
- Led Enrollment Services Division in implementation of a new software system (PeopleSoft)
- Provided oversight of all policy and procedures related to Title IV aid
- Served as project manager on university-wide committees that reviewed a particular business process
- Responsible for awarding and reconciliation of all state, federal, and institutional aid totaling over \$100 million

### **Professional Development**

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- Member, Cambridge Global Strategic Higher Education Advisory Committee
- EAB Presidential Intensive Seminar
- Southeastern Louisiana University Alumni Board of Directors
- LASFAA President and LASFAA Board of Directors
- SWASFAA Board of Directors
- Harvard Admissions Institute, Boston, Massachusetts
- Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors, Louisiana
- Girl Scouts Board of Directors, Northeast Ohio
- Member of the Gainesville Chamber of Commerce
- Member of NACAC, RMACAC, AACARO, UACRAO, PACRAO, OACRO, RMASFAA, NASFAA, NASAPA, and NACUBO
- Presented at state, regional, and national conferences on enrollment management, admissions, financial aid optimization, use of data in decision making, working in enrollment management during a crisis, how to move access to completion with the use of financial aid, and other higher education topics.
- Held various offices within professional organizations on a state, regional, and national level.

### **Awards and Recognition**

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- Woman of the Year, LASFAA Association
- Partner of the Year, Utah Parent Association
- C. Arthur Sandeen Award, University of Florida
- Partner Award, The Village Program at University of Utah