

March 20, 2023

Ms. Elizabeth Pierre, Chair
Board of Supervisors
University of Louisiana System
1201 North Third Street, Suite 7-300

Ms. Pierre and members of the Search Committee:

As a seasoned executive with a proven history of innovation, problem solving, and transformative leadership, I submit this letter of application, letters of nomination, and résumé for consideration for the position of President at Southeastern Louisiana University. The presidency at Southeastern is the only university president position that I desire to pursue because this is home - I bleed green and gold! My love for this institution coupled with my experiences and talents will greatly enhance my ability to bring a fresh perspective and a creative approach that will propel Southeastern toward the next 100 years of excellence.

I have had the pleasure of serving in numerous capacities at Southeastern Louisiana University. I joined the campus community 23 years ago as a Residential Life Coordinator and have advanced since then to my current position as Vice President for Student Affairs. My story is proof that Southeastern is a place where dreams can come true. It has been my mission to help students realize their dreams by expanding learning beyond the classroom and providing support services to aid in their development. Throughout my career, I have cultivated positive and collaborative working relationships throughout the University to do just that. My leadership has garnered the respect of the entire University community – students, faculty, staff, and executive leadership alike.

I have a proven record as an interventionist, visionary, initiator, motivator, and advocator:

- Interventionist – Launched the Lion Intervention Network (LINK), an early alert system that provides the University community with a tool to identify students facing academic challenges and/or personal hardships. LINK also serves as a warning system to identify students experiencing personal challenges in advance of a disciplinary event. Coupled with renaming the Office of Student Conduct to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability, LINK reports have reduced conduct violations. Between the Fall of 2019 until December 31, 2022, 1,030 interventions have been made. The system has an 84% approval rating among those students that have received support.
- Visionary - Created Project PULL, a mentoring and leadership development program which provides transitional support and guidance for first-year students. The first to second year retention rates far exceed

the University average. In the fall of 2021 85% of the participants returned for their sophomore year. That following year (2022), 90% of the participants were retained.

- Initiator – Introduced Evolve U, an annual high school leadership development conference. This event has served as a recruitment tool that has created a pipeline of student leaders. This event brings over 200 high school leaders to campus, exposing them to the many opportunities offered at Southeastern while helping them hone their leadership skills.
- Motivator – Expanded and transformed the Division for Student Affairs by working with team leaders to add community-based policing and programming with Blue and You; automated disability intake processes; and created the first Collegiate Recovery Program in Louisiana – Lion Up Recovery. Participants in Lion Up Recovery finished with a grade point average of 3.66 over the last three years.
- Advocate – Campaigned for Police Officer pay increases to bring them closer to pay scales at sister institutions. Successful efforts included shift premium pay and an hour rate increase. A special entrance rate increased some officers' rate by more than \$3 per hour.

My skills and abilities make me ideal to lead at this time in Southeastern's history; the institution needs an innovative problem solver that can move the campus forward as "One Southeastern!" Significant events have impacted enrollment. Budgetary challenges have been a byproduct of enrollment declines. Southeastern, however, has the ability to control its own destiny with a future focused leader at the helm. I am that leader and I understand the challenges ahead and will face them head-on with an aggressive 100-day plan. That plan will focus on enrollment, resource stewardship, campus and infrastructure security, and making key connections that foster and build relationships and expanding support for athletics.

When I am selected to serve as the 15th President of this illustrious university, I will enhance transparency with regular and varied communication with the campus community. No decision or policy will be made without input from those that will be impacted. I will improve relationships and outreach in the community and keep my finger on the pulse of workforce needs. I will continue my strong commitment to diversity and to help others recognize all contributors to the collegiate community, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, et cetera.

At our core, we are an institution that believes we can do anything we set out to accomplish. Therefore, I have no doubt that as "One Southeastern" we will survive the declining US birthrate with a global recruiting strategy. As "One Southeastern" we will solidify student connections to the university to combat first to second year student attrition. As "One Southeastern" we will build a level of pride that fills every athletic competition with scores of fans cheering on our student athletes. As "One Southeastern" we will move through any challenge - budgetary, natural, or manmade - emerging as a stronger institution.

I recognize that this extraordinary opportunity will attract a variety of applicants, and many with impressive experiences in academe. I urge you to also look outside the normal pool of applicants as you conduct your search. As my résumé indicates, the breadth of my experience at Southeastern as an administrator is proof that I have been a builder from my first day on this campus. The selected accomplishments listed in my résumé are proof that my vision of "One Southeastern" is achievable under my leadership. Realizing that a cover letter and résumé can reveal only a limited amount of one's qualifications and abilities needed to meet

the expectations of a potential employer, I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications with you. My contact information is listed above.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Lion Up!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric J. Summers", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric J. Summers, Ph.D.

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

An innovative self-starter with a demonstrated history of problem solving, seeking to serve as President of Southeastern Louisiana University - leading with visibility, transparency, and accountability with the ultimate goal of "One Southeastern!"

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Educational Administration – Higher Education. The University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA.

Master of Arts, Higher Education Administration and Student Personnel. The University of Mississippi, University, MS.

Bachelor of Science, Psychology - Minor: English. The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

October 2016 to Present

Vice President for Student Affairs - Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA.

Serve as an executive-level member of the President's Cabinet, provide leadership and direction to a comprehensive student affairs portfolio comprised of Recreational Sports & Wellness, Campus Police, Student Accessibility Services, Student Advocacy & Accountability, Student Publications, Transportation Services, Career Services, University Counseling Center, and Student Engagement (includes Campus Activities, Multicultural & International Affairs, Greek Life & Student Organizations, Student Government, and Leadership Development). Serve as the University's chief campus life officer and advise the University President on all matters pertaining to non-academic campus life. Work closely with other senior administrators in managing all aspects of university operations. Serve as an institutional leader on all student-related issues and concerns, championing the intellectual and social growth of a diverse population and ensuring that institutional policies and practices provide fair and equitable treatment of all students. Responsible for developing and implementing a vision for student life including the creation of an annual and long-term strategic plan that will establish a culture consistent with student engagement.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Worked to completely automate the disability accommodations process by removing barriers to access through the implementation of Accommodate, a cloud-based system designed to streamline and coordinate student needs. Accommodate has eliminated manual processes which delayed approval of accommodation requests. Students have realized quicker approvals with better communication between faculty and the Office of Student Accessibility
- Advised the University Police Department to enhance approachability with students by developing a community outreach program called Blue and You. Through this program, the UPD plans awareness programs, schedules trainings, and implements other initiatives to encourage student interaction.
- Introduced Prepare for Success Workshops – an opportunity for incoming freshmen to come campus to take care of last-minute details prior to the start of the fall semester. Participants receive a safety presentation, pick up books, find their classes, learn about support services, and check on financial aid.
- Lion Up Recovery is a rehabilitation program providing support for students moving through addictions from substance abuse. First in Louisiana, this program provides a safe space for students to pursue their personal and academic goals surrounded by like-minded students and counseling professionals. The program offers weekly workshops and check-ins, recovery meetings, and a host of social activities.
- Lion Safe App was launched on campus to serve as a mobile blue light phone. Downloaded through App Store and Google Play, this app allows students access to virtual safety walks, friend walks, and a panic button. Also accessible are campus maps, support resources, the Lion Traxx tracker, a safety toolbox, emergency plans, and a section to report crime.
- In response to students requests to have a location on campus to pray, a Meditation Room was established. The room provides a quiet location for those that seek a dedicated space for prayer, meditation, or reflection. This space an example of cross-cultural education, diversity, inclusion and acceptance.
- The Campus Assault Response and Education Team (CARE) was created to encourage an educational community where all individuals who participate University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of sexual misconduct. Comprised of faculty, students, and staff, the team is one part "education" and one part "response". The group of professionals develop programs, services, and campaigns to educate students and ensures appropriate resources are readily available for survivors.
- The Lion Intervention Network (LINK) was designed as a retention tool – an alert system allowing for early intervention. Any member of the university community can call for an intervention for students who are facing academic challenges, personal hardships, or any

barrier to their success or wellbeing. Through intervention, students are referred to support services such as mental health counseling and tutoring.

- The Office of Transportation Services has been revolutionized on campus with license plate reader (LPR) technology, Forever Hangtags, and metered parking. Introducing LPR technology has allowed for permit free parking registration as the vehicle license plate serves as the parking decal. Employees can skip the parking registration line through a completely online process that renews through payroll deduction. Metered parking has provided additional parking revenue while allowing the university community a new parking option.
- EvolveU is a one-day high school leadership conference for high school students. The conference is designed to equip, empower and inspire high school students to be leaders. Participants are given the opportunity to explore various aspects of leadership, meet other student leaders, and learn about and discuss leadership roles alongside Southeastern students, staff and faculty.
- The Terrell Conference offers a full day of continuing education opportunities on Southeastern's campus for counseling and other mental health professionals in the areas of supervision, ethics and diagnosis. Named for former Counseling Center Director Tom Terrell, the conference provides an affordable alternative to traveling for counselors on the Northshore and surrounding areas.

July 2011 to October 2016

Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs - Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA. Served as a senior-level administrator within the Division for Student Affairs responsible for providing leadership in campus inclusion, civility, and special divisional initiatives. Duties included directing the Office of Multicultural & International Student Affairs and the Office of Student Conduct, as well as special projects on behalf of the Vice President:

Diversity Educator - Guided efforts to nurture, build, and assess diversity related opportunities through supervision of the Office of Multicultural & International Student Affairs. Responsible for the development of programs, services, and initiatives designed to enhance the recruitment and successful retention of students from diverse and under-represented student populations.

Chief Conduct Officer - Acted as primary disciplinary officer for the University for non-academic issues of misconduct, provided leadership and direction to the Office of Student Conduct which included promoting student responsibility, civility, and respect. Administered the student conduct process, publications, and provided oversight to the Student Conduct Hearing Board. Supervised professional and support staff, student conduct database, and Board training. Coordinated Southeastern's behavioral response team (START) and ensured compliance with federal, state, and University regulations.

Principal Administrative Officer - Acted as directed by the Vice President for Student Affairs in providing administrative oversight regarding divisional initiatives. In consultation with the Vice President, coordinated and issued directives to the Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT);

developed Divisional policies and procedures; administered the Vice President's agenda; coordinated activities that shape the direction of the division; coordinated staff development initiatives; and, oversight for unit assessment preparation. Served as the chief student affairs officer in the Vice President's absence, representing the Vice President's office on various committee assignments.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Created a collaborative with three departments to fund a third-party vendor conduct management system
- Proposed and implemented disciplinary fines as a disciplinary deterrent
- Revamped the Student Code of Conduct to a less-legalistic, more student-friendly document
- Developed proposal to merge two standing Division for Student Affairs (DSA) Committees (Collaboration & Planning Committee and Staff Development Committee) into one Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT).
- Wrote the University Litter Policy and assisted in the implementation of a campus-wide litter campaign
- Supervised the creation of major campus initiatives: The Calculator Loan Program for international students and the Southeastern Food Pantry
- Wrote University Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policy

July 2001 to June 2011

Director for Multicultural and International Student Affairs - Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA.

Provided leadership to the University in diversity efforts: Coordinated the development and implementation of activities and programs for the university community promoting multiculturalism; creating a welcoming college environment for all students through programming, outreach, service, and leadership opportunities. Worked to create an all-inclusive university environment to increase awareness of diverse cultures and to ensure that adequate learning opportunities are provided to under-represented student populations, including dissemination of resources such as counseling, tutoring referral, and other services.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Created the University's first African American Alumni Chapter which now holds an endowed scholarship
- Introduced Project PULL (Promoting Unity through Leadership and Learning) to the University, a mentoring and leadership development program for minority students, with members that have retention and graduation rates higher than University averages
- Co-founded the Southeastern for a Day recruitment program for minority high school seniors
- Created a host program for international students, introduced international orientation, and originated international week
- Produced a calendar system to better organize themed month celebrations such as Black History Month

February 2007 to June 2011

Conduct Officer - Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA.

Assisted the Chief Conduct Officer in administering the student discipline process including serving as a hearing officer and conducting administrative hearings for alleged violations of the Student Code of Conduct. Advised students on due process rights and responsibilities, monitored and tracked compliance of disciplinary sanctions. Provided consultation, interpretation, and recommendations to members of the University community on disciplinary issues, produced publications, and advised the Student Conduct Hearing Board.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Coordinated the annual Statewide Louisiana Judicial Conference in 2008; creating publications, soliciting donors, contracting with speakers, handling registration applications, et cetera.
- Wrote proposal to create a coordinator position whose duties included tracking disciplinary sanctions and serving as a case manager.

RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

January 2013 to
September 2013

Adjunct Professor - Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Foundations - The University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA
Instructor for graduate level courses in Educational Leadership. Responsible for curriculum development, instructional delivery, and evaluation of master's and doctoral level students.

August 2010 to
December 2011

Southeastern 101 (SE 101) Instructor - Center for Student Excellence - Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA
Instructor for first-year experience course. Responsible for creating lesson plans to serve as an ongoing orientation for first year students, administering comprehensive lesson plans, preparing and conducting lectures, conducting testing on relevant subject matters, advising students on class scheduling, add/drop, goal formulation, and career planning.

January 2000 to July 2001

Area Coordinator & Conduct Officer - Department of Residential Life & Judicial Affairs - Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA
Managed the day-to-day operations of three residence halls including coordinating maintenance with the physical plant; evaluated the performance and service of privately contracted custodial service; proactively conducted regular maintenance checks and building evaluation sweeps. Served as a level one discipline officer. Created the Residential Learning Center living and learning academic success program.

August 2000 to
December 2000

Freshman Seminar 101 (FS 101) Instructor - Junior Division - Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, LA.
Instructor for first class offered in residence halls (Freshman Seminar 101). Responsible for creating lesson plans to serve as an ongoing orientation for first-year students, administering comprehensive lesson plans, preparing and conducting class lectures, conducting testing on relevant subject

matters, advising students on class scheduling, add/drop, goal formulation, and career planning.

PRESENTATIONS, RECOGNITIONS, CAMPUS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Arts & Lectures Committee
Columbia Theater Advisory Board
Directorship Employment Searches: Admissions, Financial Aid, Housing, Human Resources
Diversity Trainer, Southeastern Louisiana University Office of Human Resources
Equipping Resident Assistants Conference (ERA) "Best Conference Program Award" recipient
Equipping Resident Assistants Conference (ERA) presenter: "Managing Conflict"
Ginger Ford Northshore-Fuller Center for Housing, Board of Directors
Ginger Ford Northshore-Fuller Center for Housing, Education Chair
Homecoming Committee
Institutional Effectiveness Committee
Institutional Effectiveness Support Services Sub-Committee
International Student Association Advisor
L.E. Chandler Award
LACUSPA (Louisiana Association of College & University Student Personnel Administrators) conference
LACUSPA conference - Multicultural and Minority Student Advisor Roundtable
LACUSPA Dan Seymour Award
LEAD (Leaders Entering Another Dimension) Facilitator
Leadership Tangipahoa
Leadership Tangipahoa Board of Directors
Loyola Leadership Conference: "What Color Are You?" diversity workshop
NAACP Collegiate Chapter, Advisor
National Association of College Auxiliary Services-South (NACAS) Conference Host Committee
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
National Collegiate Education Award Winner
National Pan-Hellenic Council Co-Advisor
NCAA Conduct Appeals Committee
NCAA Diversity Evaluation Committee
NCAA Support Services Evaluation Committee
Northlake Community Development Corporation Board of Directors
Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
Psi Chi -The National Honor Society in Psychology
QEP Organizational Committee
Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Design Team
Resident Assistant Training Facilitator, University Courtyard at College Park, Maryland
Retention and Progression Task Force
Rock-N-Roar Fundraising Chair
Rock-N-Roar Literary Rally Chair
SACSCOC Evaluator
Southeastern Association of Housing Officers (SEAHO) Conference Scholarship Winner
Southeastern Gospel Choir, Advisor
Southeastern Louisiana University President's Black Minister Dinner Master of Ceremonies

Southeastern President's Black Minister Dinner Keynote Speaker: "Educating the Black Male"
Southeastern Threat Assessment & Response Team (START) Chair
Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT) Chair
Student Affairs Staff Development Team Chair
Student Programming and Resource Committee (SPARC)/Black Student Union, Advisor
Tobacco & Litter Free Campaign
United Way, Board of Directors
University Budget Advisory Committee
University of New Orleans Faculty Award
University Planning Council
University Withdrawal Appeals Committee
Vice President for Administration and Finance Search Committee member

First 100 Days

Initial Critical Priorities: Enrollment, Resource Stewardship, and Campus/Infrastructure Security

- Convene the University Planning Council to review progress toward *Vision 2025* and adopt enrollment recommendations outlined by the Strategic Enrollment Taskforce
- Explore academic college-based support personnel to guide career development and special projects related to recruitment and retention
- Identify and remove barriers to attracting and retaining underserved student populations
- Appoint a taskforce to recommend strategies for attracting international students
- Utilize predictive analytics to identify at-risk populations and shape interventions
- Design an intentional student experience that integrates the curricular and the co-curricular
- Understand industry/workforce needs and begin discussion on meeting them
- Call for reporting on current online education offerings and efforts to grow
- Study current academic advising processes to understand if they are developmental and guide students toward goals
- Mail personal correspondence to all non-completers encouraging participation in Compete LA
- Meet with all Tangipahoa/Northshore high school principals to understand how Southeastern can serve as a resource
- Explore new communication tools to support recruitment
- Reestablish the Budget Review Task Force to engage in a transparent and collaborative process to ensure prudent financial decision-making which protects the academic core with minimal impact on student success

- Identify and pursue new revenue opportunities and understand how the President can lead fundraising efforts
- Receive updates on SACSCOC progress and timelines, establishing necessary committees for the reaffirmation process
- Evaluate campus safety and security processes and current security authority coordination to enhance prevention efforts and preparedness for large-scale incidents
- Outline all threats to infrastructure and invest resources to combat risk

Making Connections: Listening, Learning, Exploring and Engaging

- Arrange for introductory meetings with faculty, staff, students, alumni, community partners and others that are essential to the institution's success
- Visit student meetings to understand from student leaders how the university can offer better support
- Initiate "Lunch with a Lion," dining on campus with a different faculty/staff member each week to collect perspective from the campus community
- Meet continually with board members, politicians, community groups and leaders, business leaders, donors, and alumni to promote Southeastern and learn their aspirations for the University
- Establish regular meetings with Faculty Senate and Student Government Association Presidents, and attend established meetings regularly and upon request
- Develop a crisis communication plan to establish clear guidelines for transparent communications with the campus community, media, and the public in the event of an emergency
- Engage with Centennial Committee to gain an update on progress toward celebrating 100 years of excellence
- Meet with Tangipahoa Superintendent of Schools to understand how we can work together to coordinate closures/remote work during extreme weather events
- Launch a campaign to encourage sell-out for first home football game designating game one as the kickoff to the athletic season
- Establish a goal to travel with every athletic team to at least one road competition each year
- Add athletic conference championship schedule to the spirit teams, band, and transportation calendars to avoid programming conflicts should teams advance in competition

- Establish a plan to move the Diversity Advisory Board's recommendations forward
- Reinforce a culture of caring and living up to our core values
- Establish a calendar of community events, attending as an ambassador of Southeastern and to promote collaboration efforts