

Margaret Y. Toston, Ph.D.

October 8, 2007

Mr. Alvin G. Hooten, Chair
Advisory Search Committee for Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
The University of Tennessee at Martin
224 Administration Building
Martin, TN 38238
ahooten@utm.edu

Dear Mr. Hooten:

It is with much enthusiasm that I submit my application for the position of Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at The University of Tennessee at Martin. I have long awaited the opportunity to both return to my southern roots and to continue the work that I love to do.

The qualifications you seek align directly with my competencies as an educator. With 26 years of progressive experience in higher education — twelve as the senior student affairs officer (SSAO) — I am especially adept at:

- advocating for students,
- assessing, evaluating and improving programs and services,
- reallocating resources to support new initiatives,
- developing and measuring learning outcomes,
- managing competing priorities,
- incorporating knowledge of higher education law into day-to-day decision making,
- shaping, reviewing and revising policies/procedures,
- assembling and leading high impact teams to support university goals,
- collaborating across reporting lines,
- using technology to improve both productivity and service delivery, and
- addressing workplace personnel issues.

I report to the President and as SSAO, I have provided strategic leadership and supervision in student services and student development. The units are Counseling/Wellness, Career/Cooperative Education, Health Services, Housing/Residential Life, Student Center, Recreation/Intramural Sports, Dining Services, Student Leadership Development and Activities, Student Academic Advising Center, Student Conduct, Campus Ministry, The Learning Support Center, Pre-

Collegiate and Access Services (TRIO), Disabled Student Services, The Women's Center, Financial Aid, New Student and Family Services, Early Alert, Diversity Initiatives and Programming. At my previous institution, I also supervised Division III Athletics, and Commencement.

My application highlights qualifications and accomplishments related to your position announcement. My experience in public residential institutions covers a broad scope including teaching, setting priorities and serving as a key member of the institutional re-accreditation team. I am versed in planning strategies for recruitment, enrollment, and retention. As part of my training in enrollment management, I evaluated strategies for several institutions including CCSU. I also drafted an enrollment management plan.

I look forward to traveling to UTM to discuss how I might help to advance the mission of your institution.

Sincerely,

Margaret Y. Toston, Ph.D.

Enc: Statement of Philosophy
Resume
About CCSU
References
Attachment A / Letter to CCSU

Statement of Philosophy and Priorities

Student Affairs (SA) and Enrollment Management (EM)

Coupling student affairs and enrollment management is vital to student success. I find all aspects of EM to be challenging, yet very achievable given the proper balance of capital as described by Kaplan in *Strategic Maps* (2006). First, human capital is hiring those who have the skills, talent, and knowledge to perform job duties. Second, information capital is utilizing databases, information systems, networks, and technology infrastructure to offset problems with human capital. Third, organizational capital is involving organization culture, leadership, employee alignment, teamwork, and knowledge of management.

Experience in strategic marketing for educational institutions is the most valuable facet of EM. I understand the broad spectrum of marketing, both internally and externally. Internal marketing involves mentoring, coaching and educating the community about enrollment management as an institutional responsibility. We must avoid the faux pas of one-size-fits-all approaches to student recruitment, student development and service delivery. Instead, we should utilize *systems thinking* as a critical aspect of planning for student retention and persistence to graduation. All members of the academy must help to create, implement and embrace student recruitment and student development strategies. Changes in processes, programs and policies must include impact statements so that all parties know what to expect from proposed actions. Changes also involve consulting with faculty to design educational programs to suit the market analysis while working within the financial ramifications of the institution to create a pricing structure. External marketing, on the other hand, involves all aspects of identifying, researching and assessing trends and events that inform forecasting decisions.

A successful EM plan includes four key components: targeted recruitment, expeditious enrollment, student-focused developmental retention efforts, and reasonable time-to-degree strategies. Often, the disconnect between who the institution recruits and its enrollment needs is not evident. This gap in information sharing is a formula for longer time-to-degree, unmet student expectations, unplanned transfers out of the institution, higher stop-out and drop-out rates. The plan requires the institution to know more about its competitors than it knows about itself. Example, we live in a brand conscientious society, therefore, the institution must establish itself as a *brand* to which a targeted market will invest. A loosely defined *brand* often manifests itself in messages that try to include *everything in every message*, which equals nothing to the prospective consumer. A successful EM plan, however, requires clear university-wide communication and a good understanding of students' expectations before enrollment.

EM strategies and student development learning outcomes must be mission-centric. Kotler and Fox stated it best when they wrote, *strategic planning is the process of developing and maintaining a strategic fit between the institution's goals and capabilities and its changing marketing opportunities. It relies on developing a clear institutional mission, supporting goals and objectives, a sound strategy, and appropriate implementation.*

Margaret Y. Toston, Ph.D.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Higher Education Leadership, THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI, 1994

M.Ed., Guidance/Counseling, UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA at MONROE, 1981

B.S., Speech Education, GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY, 1973

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Certificate, Institute for Management and Leadership in Education, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, July 24-August 5, 2005

Targeted Communications in Enrollment Management, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA in conjunction with Noel-Levitz, 2004

Critical Incident, Safety and Security Training (ongoing since 2004)

Work Experience in Academic and Student Affairs

2004 – Present	Vice President for Student Affairs & Lecturer, School of Education Central Connecticut State University
1995 – 2003	Dean of Student Life and Development & Assistant Professor, School of Education Maryville University of Saint Louis
1991 – 1995	Minority Student Retention & Academic Enrichment & Lecturer/Psychology Department The University of North Carolina at Wilmington
1990 – 1995	Coordinator for Local and National Testing Services The University of North Carolina at Wilmington
1988 – 1990	Director for Disabled Student Services The University of North Carolina at Wilmington
1988 Summer	Coordinator for Counseling Services Project Upward Bound Southeastern Louisiana State University

1982 – 1988

Counselor (TRIO)

Student Support Services & Lecturer
Southeastern Louisiana State University

1981 – 1982

Counselor (TRIO)

Project Talent Search & Lecturer
Northeast Louisiana State University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE**Graduate Education**

2004-Present

Central Connecticut State University

- Law, Policy, and Finance in Higher Education
- Counseling Internship and Supervision

Undergraduate Education

1988-2003

Previous Institutions

- Assistant Professor. First Year Experience
- Lecturer. Introduction to Psychology

QUALIFICATIONS for UTM

Through collaboration with and assistance from students, colleagues, and the student affairs team and I accomplished the following:

Develop and maintain programs and activities that support both the educational learning outcomes and service satisfaction and perception dimensions of student development.

Success in this area depends on frequent contact with students, strategies that influence retention and graduation rates, and the institution's ability to deliver programs and services the student wants and needs to experience a good quality of life. Under my leadership, we addressed the need for assessment and evaluation data to inform decisions about programs and services. During the first five months of my vice presidency, the staff and I reviewed existing institutional accreditation and other reports in preparation for constructing a viable assessment plan. We collected and analyzed feedback from CCSU leaders, students, faculty, and staff. At the conclusion of this initial review, I formed a student affairs advisory council and authored a two year accelerated improvement plan. The plan was responsive to students, it addressed policy issues, and it introduced systems thinking and quality indicators to the staff. It also included a procedural audit.

As Chair of the *President's Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Council*, I lead the efforts to create an alternative to party-night. The subcommittee and I developed and implemented a program that is getting rave reviews from students, the Police Department, and Judicial Programs. We serve a diverse range of students--from athletes to disabled students to transfer students.

Other Student Affairs initiatives have included creating learning communities at CCSU, introducing incentives that increased the number of new students taking the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) from 165 to over 1300, and increasing the number of students participating in the *Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory*® from 206 to almost 3000. We also hosted a campus-wide event to unveil the results. Approximately 200 faculty, staff and students attended this daylong event. My staff and I are in the process of transforming student satisfaction results to measurable learning outcomes. We sorted student results using demographic categories to determine where, if at all, groups differed with regard to perception and satisfaction. We compared the findings to national, regional, and peer institutions. I used the results to justify a new position to enhance services related to inclusiveness and campus vibrancy.

Because of my initiatives, CCSU is the only school in the Connecticut System to have designed and completed a student affairs accelerated improvement plan. We are also the only school in the System to have completed a self-study in each unit using *The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)*. The results of the CAS self-study revealed numerous opportunities to influence student growth and development through our programs and services. We also conducted a comparative analysis of our peer institutions.

Demonstrate a strong track record of achievement in developing programs and services that meet a wide range of student advocacy initiatives

To address the wide range of definitions around inclusiveness, I have listed recent initiatives that I lead. My team and I relocated the Latino Club to the Student Center so that other clubs and organizations could begin to collaborate with them to co-sponsor a wider variety of diversity programs. I also conducted a workshop with Student Affairs leaders to implement a plan to encourage more underrepresented students to assume leadership positions in clubs/organizations and to serve as peer helpers, student ambassadors, student orientation leaders, and residence hall assistants.

During the first 14 months of my vice presidency I lived in a residence hall. I am proud of this decision because it afforded me the opportunity to experience first-hand the issues affecting the well-being of our students. I had office hours in the residence hall and I often invited other staff to join me while meeting students. Interestingly, residential students informed commuter students about my presence on campus and they too benefited.

I changed the name of the student handbook as another example of a student advocacy initiative. Its new name is the *Student Survival Guide*. We also added a frequently asked questions section to entice student readers. Changes in the Guide, as noted in assessment data, reduced the *run-around* often described by students when conducting

campus business. The guide has become a popular resource for faculty, families, administrators, and staff.

Prior to my intervention, CCSU would drop approximately 750 students from fall courses for which they had registered because of nonpayment. Following my new initiative, we reduced that number to less than 58 students.

Under my leadership, we negotiated with the vendor to provide an all access meal plan for residential students in addition to a 20% discount for commuter students who purchased meals from the vendor.

A demonstrated commitment to diversity

I have attached a letter (Attachment A) that I sent to the CCSU community following a recent incident on our campus. It is but one example of my commitment to creating, supporting and promoting an inclusive and diversity community. Federal, state, and local regulations do not govern my commitment to diversity and inclusiveness. Nor is my commitment due to university policies. My commitment flows from my strong sense of humanity and civility. To that end, I volunteered to serve as the advisor and facilitator for student-led diversity initiatives. I eliminated obstacles that would have prevented our campus from hosting the nation's largest GLBT *True Colors* Conference, and supported the *Safe Zone* Program by being the first office in the administration building to designate itself as a safe zone for students. I also support Veteran Affairs, the Committee on the Concerns of Women and a host of other issues around under-representation and discrimination. As stated in my resume, I have supervised or worked in departments that support a broad range of diversity initiatives.

A record of leadership for fair and equitable treatment of and support for professional development of staff at all levels

During my administration, CCSU became an institutional member of NASPA. We increased the number attending the NASPA national conference from zero to 12 in the first year. In addition to typical professional development associated with specific departments, I funded four student affairs professionals to go with four faculty to Evergreen State in Washington State to study learning communities for two weeks. The group returned to CCSU and implemented its first multi-disciplinary learning community pilot. I sent ten members of the Student Affairs leadership team to a national CAS Conference where we had the largest contingency in attendance. My staff also attended assessment conferences as well as participated in teleconferences, and audio and web-based conferences. In 2004, I started a common reading program in which I purchased books for each member of Student Affairs including support staff and graduate interns. In 2006-07, I approved almost \$100,000 in professional development funds for use by all staff at every level.

In addition to professional development, I set aside 4% of our operating budget for staff to use for collaborative projects with each other and/or with Academic Affairs. I also started a Student Affairs common reading program so that the staff could find a shared language and purpose for their work. We have achieved tremendous success in this effort. One of the best outcomes was the reduction in the duplication and proliferation of services and programs that lead to better use of resources. We took the opportunity to reallocate those resources for new initiatives.

Strategic budget planning and management of resources in a complex environment

I develop and supervise the student affairs budget. When necessary, we use zero-based budgeting procedures to improve the process. The Student Affairs budget exceeds \$6 million. In addition to budget planning, I provide oversight for significant portions of self-supporting auxiliary and facilities operations, such as \$8 million dining and catering contract, \$1.2 million housing and Student Center reserve funds, \$9 million housing revenue, and \$2 million vending/other revenue. I am a key member of the Facilities Management Committee and I play a role in decisions about approximately \$7 million in Recreation and Athletics fees.

Previously, I was involved in the design and construction oversight of a Student Union and apartment-style housing. I participated in all phases of the process including feasibility analyses, design, and construction monitoring. In addition, I am involved in the *21st Century Housing Summit* (national task force on futuristic student housing).

Track record of accomplishments in developing partnerships that support the work of students, staff and faculty to enhance student development and learning

My work in both Academic and Student Affairs is of great benefit in this arena. I understand academic affairs and the importance of a strategic partnership between the two. To enhance student development and learning, relationships must start with understanding the role of student affairs professionals as educators, not merely service/support providers. Therefore, I launched a campaign to raise the profile and credibility of student affairs professionals. The success of the campaign is evidenced by our role in the creation of learning communities, our expanding involvement on committees, and our role in expanding the graduate school programs by offering and funding high quality intern and assistantship experiences. We have a partnership with Academic Affairs to share and use benchmarking data. Faculty and student activities co-sponsor numerous programs. The current provost/vice president for academic affairs and I co-chair a newly formed Retention and Graduation Council.

The previous provost used our accelerated improvement plan, mentioned earlier, as part of a national presentation. Other members of the President's executive committee sought permission to use the document as a model.

A highlight of my experience in partnerships with Academic Affairs came in an unprecedented move by the President to appoint me as chair of the search committee for the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The committee consisted of 14 members of the community, primarily teaching faculty.

I volunteer to teach, supervise internships, and support conference attendance for students. I created information services in the administration building to reduce the *run around* that student often describe in survey results. Student Affairs units coordinated all campus-wide study work placements that resulted in a reduction in unused financial aid. Other initiatives include support for certifying our tutors using national standards, conceiving and implementing strategies to help off-set the cost of textbook, and starting a financial literacy program for CCSU. I was successful in justifying and filling a new full-time permanent position to oversee new student transitional issues and this semester I conceived and hosted CCSU's first annual *Separation Anxiety Party* for new parents and families.

Capable of leading strategic planning for the programmatic and physical development of Student Affairs

Strategic planning requires intricate knowledge of and experience with enrollment management, assessment, evaluation, and the conversion of data into information. Knowing whom to serve, whom we plan to serve, and why, are conditions for the successful growth and financial exigency of the institution. I have drafted a student affairs strategic plan for two institutions, including CCSU, and have been intimately involved in defining institutional goals to address our mission. I was also involved in writing the strategic plan for Student Affairs at the System level. Over the past three years, our formative strategic plan has enabled the staff to make the transition from a goal-free method of operation to an outcomes-based operation. (See earlier comments regarding programs and services.) The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and I have reassigned duties across reporting lines to better support academic support services. We have collaborated to develop learning outcomes for curricular and co-curricular experiences.

The New England Resource Center for Higher Education Think Tank for Student Affairs invited me to become a member because of my experience in public higher education. The Executive Director for NASPA recommended me for the Blue Ribbon Committee to study the possibility of combining NASPA and ACPA. In 2005, I developed and presented to the President's executive council a workshop on enrollment management strategies. During the same time frame, I served as advisor to the President on matters of millennial students.

Recent & Current Committees and Memberships

- Journalistic Integrity and Responsibility Task Force (fall, 2007)
- New England Resource Center for Higher Education Think Tank (NERCHE) (2006 – present)
- Council of Student Affairs (Connecticut State System Office) (2004 - present)
- Search Committee Chair for the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (2005)
- President’s Advisory Committee on Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Chair (2004 – present)
- CCSU Town & Gown Committee (2005 – present)
- University Planning and Budget Committee (2000 – present)
- Retention and Graduation Council, Co-Chair (2006 – present)
- Academic Advising Task Force (summer/fall 2007)
- University Facilities Management Committee (2004 – present)
- NASPA Region I Member (2004 – present)
- Student Life Trustee Committee (2004 – present)
- Resiliency Center Planning Committee (2004-06)
- 21st Century Housing Summit (spring 2006)
- NCAA Recertification Committee 2005-06
- **Know How2Go** Connecticut (Part of a national campaign kickoff that runs through 2008)
- Omicron Delta Kappa Honors Society
- Strategic Management for Non-Profit Organizations (2006)
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and American College Personnel Association (ACPA) **Blue Ribbon Committee** for Consolidation (2003)

Recent & Current Honors and Awards Received

- Keynote for Educational Opportunity Program Closing Ceremony (spring 2005)
- Student Advocacy Award (by student vote)
- Black Student Association Mentor Award (by student vote)
- YWCA Leadership Award: Outstanding Contributions to Maryville University (nominated by the Vice President)
- International Who's Who of Professionals™
- Women in Leadership (nominated by a student)

Recent & Current Presentations

- Enrollment Management and the Millennial Student (NERCHE) (2007)
- Assessment in Student Affairs (2005, 2006, 2007)
- Interviewed for the teleconference produced by *National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition* (November, 2006)
- Board of Trustee Presentations (2002, 2005, 2006)
- Region I Assessment Conference. Topic: *The Evolving Role and Responsibilities for Student Affairs* (2005)
- Serving First Generation College Students (2006)
- Enrollment Management Executive Council (2004, 2005)
- NASPA Panel of Listeners (2004)

Recent Volunteer and Community Service

- Black History Programming (2006)
- University Recruitment Efforts
 - Saint Louis Working Women's Survival Show
 - Saint Louis Black Expo
- Institute for Peace and Social Justice

- Adopted a senior citizen in the community (1995 – 2004)
- Assisted a small institutions with developing program and service outcomes (2003)
- AKC Dog Show Volunteer (2006)
- Certified Indoor Gardener (1998 to present)
- Habitat for Humanity (1988 to present)
- Leadership Saint Louis (1995)
- Leadership Hartford (2005)

ATTACHMENT A

From: Student Affairs Updates
Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2007 3:47 PM
To: Administrative Departments; Academic Departments
Subject: Vice President Toston's Message to the Campus Community

Dear CCSU Campus Community

Creating an inclusive campus with respect for the diversity of all requires a comprehensive, multifaceted approach. The Student Affairs leadership team and I are working to support institutional efforts through a variety of strategic measures.

In response to the latest controversy, I have or will be conducting regular meetings with individuals and groups such as the Latin American Student Organization, Inter Residence Council, the Student Government Association President, Media Board, and *The Recorder* staff and editors. My hope is that these meetings will bring greater understanding and respect for thoughts and feelings of others.

I have started *Project Inclusiveness*, an initiative aimed at supporting student-proposed and -led programs to enhance inclusiveness and diversity programming. I have allocated a \$5,000 (one-time) budget for students and the Student Affairs staff to create a comprehensive, collaborative, and sustainable campus-wide diversity initiative. Currently, two SGA senators are organizing a working committee composed of students with leadership from John Campbell, university campus minister. Over the next ten weeks, the students, John and I will draft a proposal for addressing long-term strategies for creating a campus environment that is respectful and inclusive. You might be asked to share your collective wisdom with us during this process.

As vice president, I have also allocated a \$5,000 (one-time) budget to the Faculty Senate Diversity Committee to fund a faculty-training project that the committee wants to initiate.

Student Activities/Leadership Development is being reconfigured to focus on student leadership. A search for an Assistant Director of Student Leadership Development has begun. One key component of that position's responsibilities will be to work with the new leadership of the Office of Diversity and Equity to develop and implement diversity programming for students. To supply crucial information to assist those efforts, I have gathered student satisfaction data relating to the campus climate (Attachment A), in particular, students' feelings about whether our campus environment enables all to thrive. Professor Michael Gendron has volunteered to do an in depth analysis of the SSI results to which he will share with the CCSU community.

To ensure that we are doing our utmost to help all students, I am supporting the efforts of the Counseling and Wellness Center to search for an additional counselor. The goal is to hire a counselor with experience in multi-cultural counseling.

Similarly, I am revitalizing the student-mentoring program. The focus is on community building and inclusiveness opportunities among students as well as on providing cultural support systems to make students more comfortable on campus.

Mindful that students' families are a source of strength, resilience, and ideas for them, I am developing ways to make better use of this resource. Ramon Hernandez and I are creating a Family Advisory Council, and we are developing a website for parents to share ideas with each other and with us as well as to gain important information about the University climate through the eyes of our students.

As Vice President for Student Affairs, I am investigating the need to create a "Peace and Social Justice Institute" at CCSU. Click <http://www.phcc.edu/academics/as/psji.php> for the statement of philosophy and mission.

Finally, to assure the campus community that all of the programs aligned with Student Affairs are committed to the mission articulated by the Council for the Advancement of Students (CAS) I have asked John Campbell to conduct a self-study of diversity programming using the current standards, in particular

- To offer programs and services proactively that serve to create environments where all students can thrive
- To implement programs to promote cultural awareness and social justice
- To serve all underrepresented and oppressed students collectively
- To create shared goals and a sense of common community that serves all fairly and equitably.

I welcome ideas and suggestions for strengthening the community's efforts to reach and support all students at Central. My number is .

Margaret Y. Toston, Ph.D.
Vice President
Student Affairs

About CCSU

Central Connecticut State University is a regional, comprehensive public university dedicated to learning in the liberal arts and sciences and to education for the professions. Comprising five schools—Arts & Sciences, Business, Education & Professional Studies, Technology, and Graduate Studies—CCSU offers undergraduate and graduate programs through the Master's and sixth-year levels and the Ed.D. in Educational Leadership.

Princeton Review selected CCSU as one of "*The Best Northeastern Colleges*" and one of "*America's Best Value Colleges*."

The college guide book, *Great Colleges for the Real World: Get in, Get out, Get a Job*, selected CCSU as one of the "best 201 colleges" in the nation

Student Enrollment

The largest of four comprehensive universities within the Connecticut State University System, CCSU enrolls nearly 7,000 full-time and more than 5,000 part-time students. Of these, 9,600 attend as undergraduates, and 2,730 as graduates. Female students account for 53 percent of the student population; males, 47 percent. CCSU is richly diverse: more than 15 percent of students are of traditional minority heritage; African American students comprise nearly 7 percent of the student body; Latinos, over 5 percent; and Asians, almost 3 percent.

In 2006, 7,535 men and women applied for admission to CCSU. Average combined SAT score for the enrolling class is 1027, up 52 points from the entering class in 2000.

Faculty

The University has a full-time faculty of 400 members, more than 75 percent of whom possess the doctorate; additionally, some 400 part-time instructors offer a variety of distinctive educational and professional experiences.