

January 26, 2026

Academic Search

Re: Berkshire Community College Presidential Search

Attention: Dr. Nancy Crimmin, Dr. Eric Richtmyer, and Ms. Lauren Merriam

Dear Search Committee:

I am writing to express my profound interest in becoming the next President of Berkshire Community College (BCC). I am drawn to your unwavering commitment to the core **values of Student-Centered excellence, Diversity and Inclusion, Purpose-Driven work, Responsiveness, and Sustainability**. As a first-generation college student whose father completed only the third grade, I understand how higher education transforms lives and communities. This personal foundation deeply resonates with BCC's **mission to provide an exceptional education and a wide range of opportunities that meet the diverse needs of our community through college transfer, workforce and career pathways, partnerships, and lifelong learning**, and your **vision to provide equitable, accessible, and transformative learning opportunities focused on the current and evolving needs of our diverse community**. Your emphasis on being **Student-Centered—working to provide access and opportunity for students while supporting them in exploring and attaining their academic and career goals**—reflects the collaborative, student-centered approach I have championed throughout my career.

Student Success Leadership

My tenure at Northwest State Community College as Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff was a unique and strategic assignment. I was brought in at the inception of the new president's administration to serve as a pivotal leader and help forge a unified Executive Cabinet. The role was designed with a specific, time-bound mandate to grow the executive leadership and drive key performance metrics across the academic, student affairs, and workforce development divisions. Knowing of my aspiration to become a president, this role provided me with broad responsibility over the major components of the college while helping the president build a cohesive leadership team and provide thought leadership.

This comprehensive role included oversight of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Workforce Development, Institutional Research, Information Technology, and Grants, my focus was on immediate, high-impact growth. With responsibility for four academic divisions, curriculum development, dual enrollment, distance learning, accreditation, workforce development, and K-12 partnerships. I consistently prioritized initiatives that increased enrollment, advanced student success, retention, and completion:

- **Student Access and Completion Focus:** Increased FTE and headcount by 45% from FY22-FY25 by implementing holistic support strategies prioritizing students first through data-informed interventions, streamlined enrollment processes, and cross-division collaboration. *This demonstrates a proven record of fostering student success essential to advancing.*
- **Student-Centered Technology Implementation:** Led the implementation of CRM technology that transformed our ability to track individual student progress, identify at-risk students before withdrawal, and deliver personalized interventions at critical moments in

their academic journey. *This initiative exemplifies the "forward-thinking orientation toward technology integration" and "capacity to enhance operational effectiveness" essential for BCC's continued technological advancement.*

- **Expanded Healthcare Education Enrollment:** Recognizing regional workforce demands, led collaborative efforts eliminating barriers to enrollment, retention, and completion in healthcare programs, resulting in a 31% enrollment increase with corresponding improvements in completion rates. *This illustrates the sensitivity to diverse student needs and ability to manage transformational changes required for BCC's Strategic Goal II: Equitable Teaching and Learning, while advancing equity-centered student success priorities.*
- **Workforce-Ready Graduates:** Enabled a 126% increase in business and industry student enrollments and 227% revenue growth from FY22 to FY24 (from \$1.1 to \$4.3 million) through strategic partnerships, responsive programming, and high-touch support ensuring strong completion and immediate employment outcomes. *This displays the in-depth knowledge of workforce and economic development central to advancing BCC's Strategic Goal III: Equitable Workforce and Community Engagement.*
- **Strategic Planning Leadership:** Led the creation of our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan with student success metrics at its core, implementing Compression Planning®—a six-step visual planning process transforming creative brainstorming into actionable outcomes with stakeholder buy-in across divisions. *This demonstrates the experience in strategic planning and change management essential for guiding BCC's continued evolution and exemplifies the strategic leadership and vision BCC seeks in its next president.*
- **Inclusive Brilliance: A Framework for Belonging:** Developed and implemented a comprehensive framework recognizing that student retention and completion depend fundamentally on belonging, while fostering community across diverse student populations. *This reflects the demonstrated commitment to inclusive environments that advance BCC's equity and advocacy priorities and mirrors the ATD approach of whole-college cultural transformation to close equity gaps.*
- **Adult Student Focus:** Launched the "Be Bold" Adult Learning Initiative addressing retention challenges for non-traditional students through flexible scheduling, accelerated pathways, wrap-around services, and recognition of prior learning. *This demonstrates the ability to develop innovative programs addressing enrollment challenges and exemplifies the student-centered innovation essential to BCC's Responsiveness value.*

Upon the successful completion of my agreed-upon term at NSCC, which included realizing a 45% increase in enrollment and a 296% increase in training revenue, I fulfilled my commitment and transitioned out of the role as planned. Given a few cross-country relocations and immediate transitions into demanding executive roles, this period has provided an opportunity to rest, reset, and focus my search entirely on the ideal Presidential opportunity—a long-standing career aspiration the NSCC President knew and supported. I am energized, strategically focused, and fully prepared to commit my experience and leadership to Berkshire Community College.

During my earlier tenure as Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development at Bellevue College, I further demonstrated my commitment to student-centered innovation and regional economic impact:

- **Degree Completion Focus:** Achieved a 175% increase in baccalaureate degree attainment from 2016 to 2020 by creating seamless pathways from associate to bachelor's programs, eliminating bureaucratic barriers, and implementing intrusive advising that kept students on track. *This illustrates the record of welcoming diverse opinions to inspire and empower others to engage in a comprehensive student success agenda aligned with ATD principles*

of guided pathways and completion-focused support.

- **Lifelong Learning Pathways:** Rebranded continuing professional education as the Tombolo Institute, achieving 18% year-over-year growth through flexible learning options for working adults, stackable credentials aligned with industry needs, and completion-focused support services. *This demonstrates the ability to expand program delivery to meet regional needs while creating responsive pathways for diverse learners, advancing BCC's workforce and community engagement goals.*
- **Student Support Through External Funding:** Generated over \$18 million in grant funding specifically targeted to enhance student support services, including emergency aid, tutoring, advising, career counseling, and wraparound supports addressing food insecurity, housing instability, and transportation barriers. This achievement reflects the capacity to "improve access to resources that students need to persist and attain their educational goals" while demonstrating resourcefulness in securing external funding. *This demonstrates the experience and success in raising funds essential for BCC's continued financial health and exemplifies the financial acumen and resource management expertise BCC seeks in its next president.*
- **Student-Driven Program Development:** Spearheaded development of Washington State's first Associate of Applied Science degree in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence and established software bootcamps addressing growing demand for skilled professionals in critical fields. The college won Seattle Magazine's Community Impact Award for Job Creation and Workforce Development and was recognized as a Top 25 IT Bootcamp by Value Colleges. *This reflects the understanding of technology's changing role in education delivery and the capacity to leverage technology thoughtfully while advancing BCC's workforce development mission and innovation values.*
- **Student Success Through Industry Connections:** Fostered partnerships with industry leaders including Year Up, Coding Dojo, Microsoft, AWS, Carnegie Mellon, and the University of London, providing innovative curriculum and professional development ensuring graduates entered the workforce with competitive advantage. *This highlights the ability to advocate successfully for the college with public, private, and governmental entities and leaders, advancing BCC's community engagement and fundraising priorities.*

Addressing BCC's Strategic Priorities and Challenges

Having reviewed your strategic priorities and the opportunities outlined in your search profile, I am energized by the prospect of leading BCC through its next chapter. My experience positions me well to address key priorities:

- **Sustaining Momentum During Leadership Transition:** My experience serving in senior leadership roles during presidential transitions, combined with my collaborative approach and respect for institutional culture, will ensure continuity while bringing fresh perspectives to advance BCC's strategic goals.
- **Technology Integration and AI:** My experience leading institutional research and information technology departments facilitating digital transformation initiatives and developing programs in emerging technologies positions me to help BCC leverage technology effectively, explore AI applications thoughtfully, and enhance operational effectiveness through strategic technology deployment.
- **Strengthening Shared Governance:** I have experience working in unionized environments with faculty senate structures, building trust through authentic engagement, transparent communication, and collaborative decision-making that honors shared governance while maintaining institutional agility.

- **Workforce Development and Community Partnerships:** My record securing major grants, building industry partnerships, and developing innovative credentialing programs demonstrates capacity to strengthen BCC's impressive workforce development ecosystem and regional economic impact.
- **Addressing Enrollment Challenges:** My success growing enrollment by 45% through targeted strategies for adult learners and non-traditional students—combined with experience in accelerated formats, competency-based education, and flexible pathways—provides relevant expertise for navigating demographic shifts while maintaining BCC's commitment to access and belonging.
- **Communication and Engagement:** My approach to leadership emphasizes authentic visibility, regular communication across all employee groups and campuses, and genuine community engagement that positions the president as the accessible face and voice of the institution.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss how my leadership experience, commitment to student-centered success, collaborative approach to shared governance, and record of building partnerships align with the qualities sought in Berkshire Community College's next president. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Albert Lewis, Jr.

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Remember Your Why: Community
Colleges are America's Most Powerful
Engine for Opportunity and Renewal

