

STACEY LOWERY BRETZ

15 November 2022

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

The dedicated faculty and staff of the University of Louisville share a compelling commitment to ensuring access, opportunity, and student success. The four pillars of your strategic plan offer a vibrant framework to boldly advance community partnerships and infrastructure for research and artistry – all built upon a core commitment to the development and retention of talented faculty and staff. Your enthusiasm for public engagement to benefit your local and global communities is inviting. I write to express my interest in becoming your next Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences.

I am passionate about creating highly collaborative environments to catalyze student success and to champion the journeys of a diverse and inclusive higher education community by maximizing resource allocation. My leadership trajectory has focused on designing and implementing initiatives to transform the university. I have developed a detailed understanding of the finances of higher education. I have directed multiple initiatives critical to growth, including strategic planning and academic program prioritization. I have built communities of trust among faculty and staff to advance important university priorities. These opportunities for transformative, university-wide, service leadership – coupled with my year as an ACE Fellow immersed in executive higher education leadership – have prepared me to serve as your next Dean.

Currently I serve as the inaugural Executive Fellow in the Office of the President at Miami University. The President created this position to advance my executive aptitude en route to becoming a Dean. He invited me to join his cabinet so that the expertise I developed as an ACE Fellow would benefit Miami's leadership team. For example, the VP for University Advancement has sought my collaboration to create an Advancement Partner Certificate Program for Chairs and Directors to support the public phase of Miami's \$1B campaign. Together, the President and I are also creating a strategic leadership program for rising Miami leaders to develop executive capabilities.

The President invited me to join the leadership team of any vice president. Thus, I concurrently report to the VP of Enrollment Management and Student Success (EMSS). As Director of Special Projects in EMSS, I contribute to multiple initiatives to improve recruitment, retention, persistence, and success, with particular attention to equity and inclusive excellence. I am collaborating with the VP to develop a strategic enrollment plan that elevates our national brand and increases revenue. I serve as Miami's liaison to an international enrollment firm for a growth initiative to improve our international marketing, recruitment, and rankings. In collaboration with the CFO, we are analyzing a pricing study to reduce tuition discounting and to prioritize equitable aid strategies. Our

institution-wide commitment to student success has yielded an 89% retention rate and an 83% 6-year graduation rate. Miami has built a strong, national brand for our exceptional liberal arts education, high-impact practices, and engaged learning. More than 55% of Miami students participate in study abroad/study away and 2800 students annually work alongside faculty and graduate students in undergraduate research.

I recently completed the prestigious ACE Fellows program for executive leadership in higher education. I spent last year at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, immersed in leadership of a world-class research university whose mission and values embrace robust engagement with both of its namesake cities. I served as a member of the executive leadership team in the Office of the Chancellor and on the Council of Deans in the Office of the Provost. Chancellor Jones included me in deliberations and decision-making for institution-wide priorities. Both the Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation offered priceless mentoring about building relationships between the 16 academic colleges and 10 interdisciplinary research institutes. As an economic engine and the flagship institution, UIUC embraces and celebrates its access mission from Chicago to rural communities throughout Illinois. I eagerly contributed to the Student Success Initiative lead by the Office of the Provost. I deepened my knowledge of responsibility centered management (RCM) budget models through extended training with the Associate Chancellor for Budget and Resource Planning. I learned how to prioritize inclusive excellence and public engagement by explicitly evaluating them in tenure and promotion processes. I enthusiastically embraced the rare opportunity to learn about the financial operations and Board structure of a Big Ten Intercollegiate Athletics program. I participated in multiple discussions regarding media rights, revenue sharing, Name-Image-Likeness, and the Alston decision.

Your next Dean will need to leverage the budget model as an opportunity to responsibly steward and invest in the College's most precious resource: its people. Excellence in the College of Arts and Sciences requires robust support to build diverse and inclusive teams through the intentional recruitment and retention of talent. The Dean must strategically grow resources to support faculty and students pursuing their research and artistic passions. Engagement of corporate and foundation partners will be integral to advancing the research infrastructure and offering competitive recruitment and retention packages. Equally important, the Dean must value and reward the contributions of talented staff and purposefully support their continued professional development. I have developed significant and nuanced understandings of RCM budget models, including the symbiotic relationships between tuition-generating units, support centers, and auxiliaries. I value collaborative decision and welcome a highly functioning shared governance environment built upon transparency and data-informed deliberations. I served for 4 years as the Chair of Fiscal Priorities and Budget Planning – a standing shared governance committee of University Senate. I developed a deep understanding of how state higher education systems allocate funding for public universities. We advised the President, Provost, and CFO in the management of Miami's \$758M budget. We consulted with the vice presidents and every academic dean. We analyzed revenue opportunities for return on investment, feasibility, and sustainability. We were vocal

advocates for talent retention, merit increments, and market-adjustments focused on salary compression for faculty and staff. I find the finesse and complex problem-solving required to advance fiscal priorities to be intellectually interesting and deeply rewarding.

Investment in faculty and staff fosters excellence, which will in turn generate student success. The Dean must be an ardent supporter of the faculty who craft signature learning experiences in their studios, classrooms, and laboratories. The scholar-teacher model resonates deeply with me. As a member of the graduate faculty, I secured multiple NSF grants to support the professional development of graduate students. I have also taught general chemistry – often referred to as a ‘weed-out course,’ because students who struggle in this course find it difficult to complete a STEM/pre-professional health degree. However, to paraphrase myself from a recent interview in the *Washington Post*, I am not a gatekeeper. Rather, I am a leader who creates gateways. When I came to Miami, the general chemistry DFW rate was 30-40%. I designed and taught a general chemistry course using evidence-based pedagogies. The DFW rate for at-risk students dropped to 8% even as students scored above average on nationally standardized end-of-course exams. Moreover, these students enrolled in the next course at the same rate as students deemed not at-risk. Student success is a priority at the core of who I am as a leader.

A University of Louisville education has the power to forever transform the lives of not only students, but also their families. I hope to inspire students by sharing my own journey. My family knows first-hand how education can accelerate economic mobility, and many students might be surprised to learn that I have walked in their shoes. Just two generations ago, young girls in my family stopped attending school after 6th grade. But here I am today: the daughter of a factory worker and a maid who became a first-generation college graduate and professor. I would consider it a privilege to meet the students of the University of Louisville and to learn about their journeys. I would consider it an honor to be a fierce champion of their diverse voices and dreams.

The Dean must ensure that the College is an equitable and accessible community. Our campuses and communities must continue to grow as respectful, inclusive places to work, to live, and to learn. I have experienced, albeit as a parent, the detrimental effects of campus environs where one child struggled with inadequate support for learning disabilities. Another of my children contended with multiple administrative systems that did not acknowledge their nonbinary identity. I would be proud to become a member of the Louisville community and celebrate our collective differences.

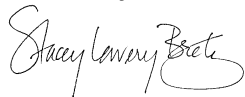
The centrality of the College of Arts and Sciences to the mission of the University cannot be overstated; it functions as the heart and soul of a vibrant learning community. The Dean must advocate for the collective centrality of humanities, arts, social sciences, and natural sciences in addressing the challenges our society and planet face. My own liberal arts education afforded priceless experiences to explore ways of knowing and the complexity of the human experience. I am honored to hold the rank of University Distinguished Professor of Chemistry in Miami’s College of Arts and Science.

The Dean must offer strategic, visionary leadership to build new academic programs. I served on the steering committee for Miami's strategic plan - an extensive, collaborative process in which we managed 6 committees comprised of 84 faculty, staff, and students. We prioritized proactive, market-appropriate academic and financial blueprints, including a sustainable academic portfolio. I chaired a committee to develop a transparent, shared governance process to evaluate and prioritize our 260 academic programs. The deans assigned ratings to each program. We created extensive databooks for each department, who in turn designed action plans to achieve measurable improvement in both student success and efficiency in delivering the curriculum. We revised workload policies to address inequities across tenure-stream and non-tenure stream faculty. We designed an optional pathway wherein faculty voluntarily sunset 40 programs, enabling strategic reallocation of resources to higher priority programs and new programs. My team supported faculty to embrace change and make our institution stronger by right-sizing our academic portfolio. I firmly believe that mutual respect among colleagues and a commitment to transparency and trust, even when constituencies may hold intensely differing views, are fundamental to building productive collaborations, centering data-informed processes, and advancing strategic initiatives.

As I reflect on your position profile, the synergy between my leadership experiences and the priorities for the College of Arts and Sciences is clear. Through my ACE Fellowship and my broad portfolio of institutional leadership responsibilities at Miami University, I have already developed essential insights and navigated experiences that many new deans must learn after stepping into the role. I am keenly aware that the Dean must offer significant leadership to develop partnerships and secure resources in order to advance excellence. I have built my career on designing and implementing shared governance initiatives to transform the university, from fiscal priorities to student success to strategic planning. I am committed to improving access, inclusivity, and retention, despite the challenging headwinds of demographic changes and competition for students.

I am excited to offer my executive leadership and inclusive decision making to the College to move forward together in visioning a future. I look forward to advancing your goals as the next Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Louisville.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stacey Lowery Bretz". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first name "Stacey" being the most prominent.

Stacey Lowery Bretz
Executive Fellow, Office of the President
Director, Special Projects for Enrollment Management and Student Success
University Distinguished Professor of Chemistry