

LEROY A. DURANT

January 5, 2006

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

Dear Mr. Hooten:

Ready to meet the challenges of growth and development toward excellence, I submit my letter of application and supporting documents for the position of Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at The University of Tennessee at Martin. With proven success in administration and management, I offer my expertise and willingness to serve this institution with the highest standards.

I offer both my professional and personal abilities and competencies as a member of the professorate and as a senior administrator with more than 15 years of experience in higher education. I have served as Vice President for Student Affairs of three senior universities to include Grambling State University in Grambling, Louisiana, Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi, and Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

In addition, I was able to provide value-added leadership in many areas of student development at these institutions. At Jackson, I administered more than a \$15.5 million dollar budget with auspices and accountability for 20 units. At Grambling, I administered a \$14 million dollar budget responsibly and thoughtfully for 15 units.

Before assuming my current position at Claflin University, I served in a dual capacity as the Vice President for Campus Development and Operations at Jackson State University for fours months while also serving in the position of Vice President for Student Life. As Vice President for Campus Development and Operations, I was responsible for Human Resources, Publications, E-Center, Housing, Facilities Management, ID Center Food Services, and the Post Office with an operating budget of \$25 million dollars and a professional staff of 150.

With teaching experiences on the graduate and undergraduate levels, I conducted research, received extramural funding, published numerous articles, and served on innumerable committees. My administrative duties have comprised responsibility for long range planning, managing major budgets, supervising, implementing

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policies and procedures, and assisting with the development of university strategic, long range, and master plans. In addition, I have assisted with preparation for the institution's self-study and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools evaluation process and visits. My experiences have culminated in making me acutely aware of the diversification of university life. Serving as a key member of the president's cabinet enhanced my knowledge of academics, fiscal affairs, planning and assessment and institutional advancement.

Distinctively, my leadership in the Division of Student Affairs at Claflin University has contributed immensely to its ranking in the "Top Ten" and as number one in the "Best Value" categories among Southern Comprehensive Colleges in the Guidebook to American's Best Colleges, cited in U.S. News & World Report 2005. These achievements are the result of the presidential team's ideal of "students first" and the engagement of daily deliberate student development as a core institutional thrust.

At Claflin University, my senior level administration requires budgetary, fiscal, and strategic planning, coupled with senior level management responsibilities. I strive to provide "infectious" leadership in the varied and diverse 16 units at the University, catapulting Claflin to unparalleled heights. Among these units that work with effectiveness and efficiency are Retention Academic Center, Freshman College, Residential Life, Student Government, Student Activities, Student Life, Athletics, Counseling Center, Career Services, Religious Life, Health Center, Public Safety, and TRIO Programs – Upward Bound, Talent Search, Upward Bound Math and Science, Student Support Services, and GEAR-UP.

Unequivocally, my forte is leadership in higher education, to which I commit and to which I serve to perpetuate excellence. I look forward to present personally and professionally my case for leadership and welcome the opportunity to interview with you. Conveniently, you may contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

Leroy A. Durant

Leroy A. Durant, Ed.D.

Enclosures

Student Affairs Philosophy
Leroy A. Durant

Philosophically, there are three kinds of people in the world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder, what happened which opens my beliefs of Student Affairs. It is indeed my personal philosophy to *make things happen*. As an administrator, I have the wisdom to know that I am investing time in something that matters--transferring knowledge, for we know that knowledge is power and that the mind is an instrument to be fully developed.

Understanding that self-motivation comes from self-knowledge, students should have freedom of inquiry and expression, but at the same time be obligated to exercise good judgment and maintain the highest standards of intellectual integrity. I am of the belief that students should be challenged mentally. It is my mission to develop in them the ability to think independently, accept responsibility, assess critical ideas, and to interact with others from diverse backgrounds. We need to adequately prepare students for careers and positions of leadership and develop their thirst for additional education through graduate and professional schools. In order for this to happen, students must be provided effective and sufficient counseling, which should help them to realize that their future lies chiefly in their own hands. It is their responsibility to make a decision and move forward responsibly. In addition, students must be taught to predict life's alternatives as well. Planning is the key component to success. Too many of our students are unable to strategize their alternatives and opportunities. Successful people succeed because they learn from their failures.

We, as educators and administrators, must take an active role in preparing our students for success. I encourage students to not be afraid to fail; failure brings on success and we should be willing to commit to improvement. I personally believe that students who enroll in a university setting are in search of intellectual and personal challenges from this type of environment, with the expectation that the Division of Student Affairs will provide opportunities for this balance to occur. It is the responsibility of the Division of Student Affairs to meet the expectations of students and provide an environment conducive for intellectual and social growth through effective programs. We know that students bring real issues and challenges to us, and we are also aware that they are the primary stakeholders of the institution.

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Cooperation between student affairs and academic affairs requires certain approaches and attitudes on the part of student affairs personnel, academic faculty, and the administration. The emphasis on promoting a more cooperative spirit and attitudes between student affairs and academic affairs professionals must be developed and fostered through teamwork. Communication is the key to building respect and to insuring that each area acts with an appropriate recognition of other area's special expertise and challenges. Joint efforts can help antagonism diminish and enrich cooperation. Regardless of the nature of the institution, it is my belief that the students are the greatest asset and they give credence to the school's mission and existence. I am a firm believer that faculty, staff, and administrators must keep in mind at all times that the students are the most important resource at the institution.

In summary, creating successful partnerships with student affairs and academics is crucial to the success of an institution as it strives to provide and promote holistic learning for the students. When initiating a merger between the two areas, the students must be made to see the need as a vital component of their success which strengthens the university community as a whole. Institutions must work to bridge the gap between student affairs and academic affairs, or even eliminate it to satisfy the social, personal, emotional, and educational development of the students. The success demonstrated in achievement after collaboration between the two entities would prove to be phenomenal, and the goals of the institution for its students would be realized. It is exemplary of Abraham Lincoln's thought, "Together we stand; divided we fall." Uniting student affairs and academic affairs will ensure the fulfillment of the institution's mission, improved retention, and would improve the total college experience for students which illuminate the idea that "Students are our greatest asset and we are educating the *whole* student."

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Professional background reflects years of successful experience in Higher Education Administration that includes the following:

*Personnel Supervision and Training
Organizational Expertise and Planning
Strategic Planning
Budgeting and Fiscal Planning
Research and Statistical Analysis
Counseling and Interviewing Skills
Governmental Agencies*

EDUCATION

- **Ed.D.** Doctor of Education
Higher Education/Administration, 1990
TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY, Houston, Texas
- **M.A.T** Master of Arts
Sociology, 1978
GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY, Grambling, Louisiana
- **B. A.** Bachelor of Arts
Sociology, 1975
Grambling State University, Grambling, Louisiana

FELLOWSHIPS

Bush Foundation Fellow
Harvard Institute for Higher Education
Institute for Educational Management (IEM)
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Cambridge, MA (2004)

Harvard Institute for Higher Education
Management and Leadership in Education (MLE)
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Cambridge, MA (1996)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Oxford Round Table at St. Antony's College in the University of Oxford,
Oxford, England (2004)

ACE Fellow (2000)

Nissan-ETS Fellow, Student Affairs (2001)
North Carolina A&T State University
Greensboro, NC

Institute for International Research, Executive Leadership Development
Washington, DC (2000)

Leadership Jackson - Community
Jackson, MS (1998)

PROFESSIONAL CAREER EXPERIENCES

CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY, Orangeburg, South Carolina

*Vice President for Student Development Services and Assistant
Professor of Sociology/Criminal Justice (2001- present)*

- Provide leadership and oversight for the planning, management, and facilities operations for student development services division with a budget over \$6.5 million and 16 units to include: Retention academic center, housing, counseling, career counseling and placement, student government, public safety, student life, athletics, Freshman College, health center, religious life and other academic support programs with full time personnel exceeding 70. The University enrolls approximately 1700 students.

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY, Jackson, Mississippi

Vice President for Student Life (1997-2001)

- Served as senior administrator with fiduciary responsibilities for budgeting and fiscal planning, strategic planning and assessment, student development, and a continuum of management duties for a budget of \$15.5 million with a division comprised of 20 diverse student life program units with full time personnel exceeding 150. The University enrolls approximately 7,000 students.

JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY, Jackson, Mississippi

Vice President for Campus Development and Operations
(May 2001-July 2001)

- Provided dual leadership for Campus Development and Operations and Student Life with operational responsibilities for human resources, campus printing center, e-center, housing, facilities management, ID center, food services and the post office with a budget of \$25million dollar. These units were served by a professional staff of 75.

GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERISTY, Grambling, Louisiana

Dean of Students/Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice (1995-1996)

- Served as primary administrative officer of student life with 10 diverse program units and responsible for an operating budget of \$10 million. Formulated, implemented, and evaluated University procedures as they pertained to students including student rights and responsibilities, student academic grievances, academic standing and the University's judicial process with full time personnel exceeding 65. The University enrolls approximately 7,000 students.

Interim Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students and
Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice (1994-1995)

- Provided leadership for 15 units with a budget of approximately \$14 million. Chief administrative officer for planning, budgeting, management, and student development programs, supporting the academic mission of the University with full time personnel exceeding 120. The University enrolls approximately 7,000 students.

Dean of Student Life/Assistant Professor (1992-1994)

- Coordinated and evaluated staff for student life area with recommended salary structure for merit promotion and termination with a budget of \$10 million. Prepared short and long range goals and objectives for student life to correlate with those for student affairs to comply with the University's mission statement.

Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice Department (1990-1992)

JEFFERSON COUNTY ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT
Beaumont, Texas

Intake Supervisor (1984-1990)

LAMAR UNIVERSITY, Beaumont, Texas

Administrative Intern to the Vice President for Administration and Counsel (1988)

Instructor (part-time) (1983, 1985, 1986)

HOPE CENTER FOR YOUTH, Houston, Texas

Family and Youth Counselor (1978-1979)

GRANTSMANSHIP AND FUNDRAISING ACTIVITES

- *Fundraiser*, Claflin University, Athletic Program
- *Principal Investigator*, U.S. Department of Education, Ronald E. McNair Program, \$800,000. Jackson State University, 1999-2003.
- *Fundraiser*, New Student Orientation, \$30,000. Jackson State University, 1999-2000.
- *Fundraiser*, “Adopt-A-Room” Campaign, Jackson State University, 2000.
- *Principal Investigator*, UNCFSP Learn and Serve Grant Program, Service Learning Project, \$90,000. Claflin University, 2004.
- *Principal Investigator*, Affordable Access, Karse Foundation, \$50,000. Jackson State University, 1999.
- *Principal Investigator*, Family and Violence, U.S. Department Justice, \$350,000. Grambling State University, 1996.

UNIVERSITY COURSES TAUGHT

Introduction to Criminal Justice
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
Probation and Parole
Introduction to Sociology
Research and Statistics
Personality, Culture, and Society
Social Psychology
Sociology of Law

The Family

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COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Claflin University, Orangeburg, South Carolina

Member, Administrative Council

Member, Board of Directors, Community Development Corporation (CDC), Incorporated

Member, The Freshman College Committee

Member, President's Cabinet

Member, South Carolina Life and Palmetto Fellows Appeals Committee

Member, University Facility Planning Committee

Member, University Fundraising Board

Member, University Grievance Committee

Member, University Strategic Planning Committee

Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi

Chair, Athletics Certification Interim Report Committee, 2000.

Chair, Strategic Initiative on Retention, 1999.

Chair, Campus Committee on the NCAA Inquiry, 1999.

Member, University Strategic Planning Committee, 1999-2000.

Member, SACS Steering Committee, 1998-2001.

Chair, Committee for the Athletic Director, 1999.

Member, Search Committee for the Director of Public Information, 1998.

Member, Search Committee for the Director of the Mississippi Urban Research Center, 1997.

Member, Search Committee for Executive Director of Development, 1997.

Grambling State University, Grambling, Louisiana

Member, Search Committee for the Athletic Director, 1994-1995.

Member, Search Committee for the Dean of the Graduate School, 1994.

Member, Search Committee for the President, 1993.

Member, Search Committee for the Vice President for Finance, 1993.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)

Presenter, "Integrating Academic Affairs and Student Affairs: Educating the Whole Student", Oxford Round Table, St. Anthony's College in the University of Oxford, Oxford, London. July 2004.

Presenter, "Cultural Diversity Revisited: Beyond Race and Gender to Disabilities." The Annual Conference of the Alabama-Mississippi Sociological Association, Mississippi College, Clinton, Mississippi. February, 2000.

Presenter, "Management Styles in Corrections." Texas Correctional Association, Corpus Christie, Texas. June, 1998.

Presenter, "Attitudes of Students Toward Homosexuality." Mid-South Sociological Association Meeting, Monroe, Louisiana. November, 1997.

Presenter, "Current Issues and Challenges in Student Affairs." The Mississippi Chief Student Affairs Officers Conference, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi. February, 2000.

Presenter, "The Division of Student Affairs and Graduate Concerns." The National Black Graduate Student Conference, The University of Texas-Austin. May, 1998.

Presenter, "Synthesizing Social Science Knowledge: Race, Race Relations, and Racism." Southern Sociological Annual Meeting, Nashville, Tennessee. April, 1999.

RESEARCH, PUBLICATIONS, AND SELECTED WRITINGS

- Durant, L. A. Ray, P. G. & Lindsey, L. (2000). The Best of the New South: The Strategic Plan for the City of Jackson, Mississippi," (Comprehensive Document for the Mayor of Jackson Mississippi).
- Durant, L. A. Ray, P. G., Harris, W. & Lindsey, L. (2000). The Best of the New South: The Strategic Plan for the City of Jackson, Mississippi. (Comprehensive Document for the Mayor of Jackson Mississippi).

- Durant, L. A. Ray, P. G., Harris, W. & Lindsey, L. (2000). The Best of the New South: The Strategic Plan for the Department of Administration. Jackson Mississippi.
- Durant, L. A. Ray, P .G. Harris, W. & Lindsey, L. (2000). The Best of the New South: The Strategic Plan for the Department of Fire. Jackson, Mississippi.
- Durant, L. A. Ray, P. G., Harris, W. & Lindsey, L. (2000). The Best of the New South: The Strategic Plan for the Department of Human and Cultural Services. Jackson, Mississippi.
- Durant, L. A. Ray, P. G., Harris, W. & Lindsey, L. (2000). The Best of the New South: The Strategic Plan for the Department of Personnel Management. Jackson, Mississippi.
- Durant, L. A. Ray, P. G., Harris, W. & Lindsey, L. (2000). The Best of the New South: The Strategic Plan for the Department of Parks and Recreation. Jackson, Mississippi.
- Durant, L. A. Ray, P. G., Harris, W. & Lindsey, L. (2000). The Best of the New South: The Strategic Plan for the Planning and Development. Jackson, Mississippi.
- Durant, L. A. Ray, P. G., Harris, W. & Lindsey, L. (2000). The Best of the New South: The Strategic plan for the Department of Police. Jackson, Mississippi.
- Durant, L. A. Ray, P. G., Harris, W. & Lindsey, L. (2000). The Best of the New South: The Strategic Plan for the Department of Public Works. Jackson, Mississippi.

MEMBERSHIPS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- American Association of Higher Education
- National Black Graduate Student Association, *Associate Director*
- National Association for Student Affairs Professionals
- Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education
- Southern Sociological Society
- Student Judicial Professionals

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

Participant, ACE Conference (Fall, 2004), Atlanta, Georgia.

Participant, NAFEO Annual Conference (Summer, 2003), Palm Beach, Florida.

- Participant, NAFEO Annual Conference (Summer, 2001), Palm Beach, Florida.*
- Participant, Alabama-Mississippi Annual Sociological Association Conference (Spring, 2000), Clinton, Mississippi.*
- Participant, The Mississippi Chief Student Affairs Officers Conference (Spring, 2000), The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi.*
- Participant, The Mid-South Sociological Association Annual Conference (Spring, 2000), Jackson, Mississippi.*
- Participant, Annual Conference of Higher Education and the Law (Summer, 1999), The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.*
- Participant, The Southeast Association of Housing Officers Annual Conference (Spring, 1999), Biloxi, Mississippi.*
- Participant, The Southern Sociological Society's Annual Conference (Spring, 1999), Nashville, Tennessee.*
- Participant, The National Association for Student Affairs Professionals Conference (Spring, 1999), Tallahassee, Florida.*
- Participant, The National Black Graduate Student Associations' Annual Conference (Spring, 1999), Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.*
- Participant, A National Conference on School Violence (Spring, 1999), Jackson, Mississippi.*
- Participant, The National Association for Student Affairs Professionals Conference (Spring, 1998), Jackson, Mississippi.*
- Participant, The National Black Graduate Student Association's Annual Conference (Spring, 1998), University of Texas, Austin, Texas.*
- Participant, The National Association for Equal Opportunity for Blacks in Higher Education (Spring, 1998).*
- Participant, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Conference on HIV/AIDS Campus Policies Initiative (Spring, 1998), Atlanta, Georgia.*
- Participant, Welfare Reform Conference: Partnering to Rebuild Our Community (Summer, 1998), Jackson, Mississippi.*
- Participant, Annual Conferences of Higher Education and The Law (Summers 1997, 1996, and 1993), University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.*
- Participant, Annual Conference of Louisiana Colleges and Universities (Spring, 1993), Louisiana College, Pineville, Louisiana.*
- Participant, The Conference of Texas Association of Black Personnel in Higher Education (Spring, 1992), Waco, Texas.*
- Participant, The American Association of Higher Education (Spring, 1991), Austin, Texas.*

HONORS/ SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS/COMMUNITY PUBLIC SERVICES

Community Leadership Award, 1989
Probation Officer of the Year, 1987
Outstanding Young Man of America Award, 1986
Member, Board of Directors, Boys and Girls Clubs of America
Soccer Coach, Young Men Christian Association (YMCA)
Federal Alternative Program for At-Risk Youth
“I Have A Dream Program” for Underprivileged Children
Senior Citizens Exercise Programs
Judge, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Pageant
Church Activities: Church School and *Judge*, Talent Competition