



Professor Leo Rebholz
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Dear Search Committee:

Please consider this letter, and accompanying CV, as my application to the Interim Chair position. My interest in the position is for temporary (1 year) service to the department. This department, and Clemson overall, has been good to me, and I am happy to give back by serving in this role. Many of our Professors are busy with other important things next year and do not wish to serve in this capacity, which leads me to expect only a small number of applicants for the position. I have no expectation of personal gain from this service (compared to the “perks” I currently get for UG coordinator), other than experience and an opportunity to learn more about the department, and faculty who I do not currently have contact with. I have **zero** plans of becoming a chair for a long time, and certainly will not apply for the permanent chair job next year.

For qualifications, I do not know if one can know if they are ready for such a job until they get into it. I am a Professor and accomplished researcher with lots of papers, funding and students, and I have written textbooks and won a department teaching award. I have two years of administrative experience as the Undergraduate Coordinator, which I have found to be a rewarding position. I have served on MSC for 4 years. I know and love every member of the Staff (and I think the feeling is mutual, or at least they are good at faking it); a good relationship with the Staff will be critical for an Interim Chair’s success. I believe I am also on the same page with most of the faculty on most departmental issues – I recently served on both the Chair Evaluation Committee (2015) and the Chair Search Committee (2016-2017), so I have a pretty good idea of what the department likes and does not like (our faculty are quite good at expressing the latter). I also spend a lot of time talking with faculty across all disciplines, so I think I have a good idea of the (very) different ideas that different faculty members have for the future of this department. I enjoy mentoring young faculty, and take personal satisfaction in their success.

I think I have at least some qualities of a not-terrible chair. I am a very transparent person – you always know what I am thinking (for better or worse... I am told maybe I should not volunteer so much). I am honest. I like to be productive. I do not take myself too seriously, and like to joke around and laugh. I do not think I am better than anyone else – here I am referring to people in general. I call out dishonesty when I see it. I do not have a temper, and I can disagree with people without it becoming personal. When others have negative or untrue things to say about me, it does not bother me a bit and I do not lose sleep over it [there are important things in life I do lose sleep over; none of them involve work]. Still, I recognize I have flaws and sometimes make mistakes; I am human.

I view the Interim Chair’s role next year as taking care of the day-to-day administrative tasks, guiding the department through some administrative restructuring (assuming we agree as a department on something), and being an advocate for the department. Two very important roles of any chair, in my opinion, concern evaluations/raises and hiring - however I expect to have very little impact on these



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issues. After speaking with Dean Young, I am told that Chris will complete evaluations before he leaves, and any merit raises would be tied to these evaluations. However, having been at Clemson for 10 years, I know it is generally a pointless exercise to discuss how to distribute merit raises, as dividing \$0 is quite easy. Hiring priorities for this coming year are set, and if we have to deal with next years' or are fortunate enough to get more for this coming year, this will be the decision of the MSC – I would facilitate a discussion of hiring priorities, and then the MSC would vote on what order the priorities would be. There will be TPR decisions that need to be made next year by the Interim Chair, and I would do my best to be as fair and objective as possible – certainly decisions the Interim Chair would make should not contradict 6+ years of Form 3's and TPR reappointment letters. I think part of the chair's job is to help faculty going up for promotion pitch their case in the best possible way, which includes acknowledging and addressing holes and weaknesses, and not trying to cover them up. As far as other issues that will undoubtedly come up that will be controversial and do not have strong support, I will try to put off such decisions as much as possible for a future permanent chair or director.

My goals are for the department to continue making progress toward becoming a first rate research department that provides an unbeatable educational experience, and to facilitate agreement (or at least respectful disagreement) on the issues we will face. For the undergraduate program, I would push for more involvement of the research faculty in the ASFM emphasis area – while Mark and Erwin are doing a great job, they need help, as ASFM has become half of our undergraduate program. For the graduate program, important issues are TA salaries (too low) and fees (too high), and pushing for more flexible budgets. For the department as a whole, the goal would be a restructuring that a strong majority of the faculty are happy with.

The main thing I would request from the Dean, outside of the standard chair package, is a postdoc so that my research program can continue without major interruption. I have a current grant with NSF, and pending grants with NSF and ARO, and so I cannot afford a year of zero research productivity.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Leo



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