

March 28, 2015

William S. Taylor, Ph.D.

R.H. Perry and Associates
2607 31st Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Dear New Mexico Highlands University Presidential Search Committee:

I am pleased to submit this letter and my curriculum vitae as my application for the President of New Mexico Highlands University.

I have been with Highlands University for nearly ten years, having served in various capacities, including the Vice President for Finance and Administration and the Dean of the School of Business. My love of teaching and economics brought me back to the class room, and I am currently a Professor of Economics in the Business Administration. I believe that my experiences and familiarity with the university combined with those gained elsewhere in my professional career provide me with the skills and attitude necessary to lead Highlands University into the future.

Highlands University is a great open enrollment institution that welcomes and embraces students from all over New Mexico and other states and nations. As a result, Highlands provides a wonderful environment that brings together an incredible mix of peoples. This mix includes the proud descendants of Spanish and Mexicans who first arrived in New Mexico in 1598, the Native Americans who uneasily received them, the Anglo population that arrived with the railroads and the opening of the west, African Americans students and international students from West Africa, China the Indian Subcontinent, and elsewhere. Add it all together, and you have the makings of a place that I find magical. And, yet the University faces many challenges, including tight finances, falling enrollments and poor retention. No one person can solve these problems, but I believe that working together, the regents, university administration, faculty, staff, students and concerned member of the broader community can make significant improvements. I believe that I bring the imagination, vision, analytic rigor, work ethic and the ability to work and inspire others needed to move the University forward.

Addressing the University's challenges will require vision and strategies for turning it into reality. In short, the University needs a good strategic plan—one that inspires, that analyzes the university's strength, weaknesses and opportunities, that develops doable strategies to meet the challenges and turns opportunities into realities. I have taught strategic planning as part of the strategic management course at Highlands. More importantly, I have experience with strategic planning and tying those plans to the budgeting process. As the Legislative Finance

Committee's Chief Economist, I took a leading role in developing the state's movement from line-item budgeting to strategic and performance-based budgeting. My responsibilities included teaching the concepts, starting with logic models that lead to strategies and desired outcomes, to budget professionals working for the state. These experiences were instrumental in allowing me to work internationally with the United States Treasury Department's Office of Technical Assistance in Dakar, Senegal. The lessons that I taught and learned in Senegal, Mali and other parts of West Africa are applicable to strategic planning and budgeting at Highlands. So, I have volunteered and am part of the University's strategic planning team, which is working hard to develop a plan that provides a vision and blue print to the future, and a work plan that will make things happen.

One of the first challenges I would like to see addressed in the strategic plan is an approach to marketing of the University that emphasizes recruitment and strategic enrollment growth. The sad fact is that while Highlands has a great story to be told, we need to find a better way to tell it. As President, I would like to take a strong role, working with our recruitment and financial aid experts and the faculty to develop and carry out such a plan. I believe that my experiences in planning, in linking budgets to strategic priorities and time as a recruiter will prove valuable assets for these efforts. Early in my tenure at Highlands, the University learned that I had spent time in French speaking West Africa as a Peace Corps Volunteer and a diplomat. The Vice President for Student Affairs and the International Student program director asked me to participate in a recruiting trip to Cameroon. The trip was highly successful. I was able to go on the radio and make live presentations to a number of audiences. We returned with many applications, soon followed by live students. Highlands University can attract students from all over the world. I have long wanted to recruit in Mexico and other Spanish speaking countries, where again I could go on the radio and make live presentations...in Spanish.

The University's marketing efforts need to cast a broad net. But, they also need to target critical audiences, including state and local governments. I have extensive experience work with the legislative branch of government. My service with the Legislative Finance Committee allowed me to establish credibility as an expert in fiscal policy—budgets and taxes. It also allowed me the opportunity to develop relationships with legislators, legislative staff and financial staff in the executive branch. I believe that these relationships and my credibility with important policy makers will enable me to speak with authority as I tell the Highlands story and try to make the case for legislation important to the University. In addition to having excellent relations with state government, I also have very good relations with local government. I have worked with the City of Las Vegas to develop efforts to attract new investment to the City and see it grow. I worked with the Mayor and City Manager to promote the development and beautification of the City, focusing largely on the historic downtown area that is home to Highlands University. We have had several successes, including attracting investment to the Plaza Hotel, the Castaneda Hotel, the establishment of a pizza parlor and a brew pub that caters in large part to Highlands students. But, we have a long ways to go, if we want to really make Las Vegas a college town, or at least a town that opens its arms to our students.

The University also faces financial challenges. I have heard President Fries express concerns about the University low level of reserves. Apparently, these were depleted by cost over-runs associated with the construction of the new student center. Although, I have a lot of experience

with budgeting and financial management, I would be disingenuous to suggest that these skills will lead to an easy solution to the problem. Still, I believe that I can call upon my experiences with budgeting and my commitment to open, transparent processes to shine a light on the problem, gather input from all our stakeholders, and gather support for a plan to rebuild the University's finances. I would strive to meaningfully involve the faculty in this process. As Vice President for Finance and Administration, I had the opportunity to sit across the negotiating table with the faculty's representatives. That experience and related experiences and conversations have convinced me that the faculty and administration share the same broad concerns about the university and its students. I would hope that I could build strong ties to the Faculty Association and the Faculty Senate to work collaboratively whenever possible, while recognizing that there may occasionally be differences of opinion about program and budgeting priorities. An open, collaborative process can go a long way to keep disagreements from becoming disagreeable.

The University has a great mix of students. I have had the opportunity as a Professor and administrator to get to know many of them. Most students I talk with enjoy Highlands University. They report high levels of satisfaction with their education. They love the fact that most of our faculty knows who they are, and genuinely care about them. However, I also hear a common complaint—there isn't anything to do. Strategic planning and other processes afford the university administration the opportunity to listen to students' concerns, and develop initiatives to address them. There has been some progress in this regards. The NMHJ foundation has invested in a brew pub that welcomes students, the Athletic Department has established some excellent relations with some of the local businesses, like J.C.'s Pizza. We need to build on these efforts. I believe that my experiences working with the city government and local non-profits like the Main Street and the Economic Development Corporation could be useful in advancing these efforts. I would hope to build on these experiences and commit to a stronger role in community development. Although, my remarks have focused on the Las Vegas community, I am well aware that Highlands has students in Centers and on-line all around the state. Making these students feel that they are valued and integral to Highlands is a challenge. But, it is not one that Highlands alone is facing. I would look for the University to look at the experiences of other universities and how they used technology and other approaches to address these concerns.

It is impossible to talk about students at Highlands without acknowledging that student-athletes are a large, important part of the undergraduate student population. I am the faculty athletic representative (FAR) and an ex-officio member of the Faculty Athletic Committee. My role as FAR has allowed me to get to know many of the University's coaches and athletic administrators. My experience tells me that they really care about the young people that they have recruited to be part of Highlands, and they are taking efforts to see that their students succeed in the class room as well as on the field. I also have had many student athletes in my classes, and found that like all students, they generally are truly interested in learning. But, they face heavy work load demands. The University can't make those go away; student athletes expect and need to be held to the same demands as all students. However, we can work with the athletic department to try to develop course schedules that take into account the practice and travel schedules for various teams. These are issues that the Faculty Athletic Committee has been working on for the Academic Senate. I would hope to continue this work.

The face of Higher Universities throughout the country is changing, and changing rapidly. In large part this is driven by advances in technology. Technological advances serve as both a complement and substitute to the traditional college experience. I currently teach both traditional classes and on-line classes, and I have seen the benefits and limitations of technology. The advantages are impressive and can serve to complement traditional classes, allowing for the creation of new ways to share information and to assess student learning. But, if the University is going to embrace technology for the delivery of some of its programs, it needs to have technology that is attractive and works. I would like to revive the technology committee, asking them to take another look at how Highlands delivers on-line classes and what it needs to do to make its on-line programs attractive and competitive. And, while technology and on-line education are important to the University's future, there will always be a place for the traditional college experience. Most undergraduates seem to value the college tradition. The competition for these students will become increasingly fierce. As discussed above, for Highlands to succeed in this arena, it will need to make advances and improvements in the college experience.

As you may have gathered in reading this letter, Highlands University is a special place for me. I am not a native to Las Vegas, but I have strong ties and a deep attachment to the place. My mother was born on a ranch in neighboring Mora County, and I have family and friends in the area. For all the wonderful things about Northeastern New Mexico, it is relatively poor, offering few economic opportunities for many of its young people. Highlands University plays a critical role in addressing these challenges by providing an accessible, affordable, quality education to every student who chooses Highlands. I look forward to the opportunity to being able to serve New Mexico Highlands University for many more years.

In closing, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to apply for the President position at New Mexico Highlands University. I look forward to the opportunity of an interview.

Sincerely,

William S. Taylor, Ph.D.

WILLIAM S. TAYLOR, Ph.D.

EDUCATION

- **Ph.D., Economics**, University of New Mexico, July 2001
- **M.A., Public Policy Studies**, University of Chicago, June 1986
- **B.A., History**, University of California at Los Angeles, May 1974

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Professor of Economics, New Mexico Highlands University, August 2010 to Present

Primary duties include teaching economics and finance courses, service to the university and community, and research.

- Teach economics courses, including Principles of Microeconomics, Principles of Macroeconomics, Intermediate Microeconomics, Public Finance and Financial Markets and Institutions.
- Service to the University and Community: Serve on numerous university and community committees and advisory boards. Currently serving as: the University's Faculty Athletic Representative (and ex-officio member of the Faculty Athletic Committee). Also served for the past several years as a member of the Tenure and Promotion Committee. Community service includes serving as Chair of the City of Las Vegas Lodgers Tax Board, as a board member on the Las Vegas Main-Street, and the Las Vegas Rotary Club. Duties with boards included policy direction and fund raising. In the past year, also served as the interim Director of the NMHU Gear UP program, whose goal was to increase high school graduation and college enrollment in Northeastern New Mexico.
- Research: Current research is applied to community development efforts. Participated and oversaw the reports prepared for the closing of the NMHU Gear UP program. Participated in developing the research agenda for the University's Gear Up grant application, which was presented with Professors Margot Geagon and Chris Nelson at the 2015 national conference. Also included are review and critiques of major and minor business initiatives such as the reuse of the Castaneda Hotel. Also working to support the Entrepreneurship program that is supported by the Highlands Foundation. In the recent past, participated in community forums on topics such as the economic impact of undocumented immigration to a regional immigration and the economic impact of the Arab Spring to students at the United World College.

Vice President for Finance and Administration, New Mexico Highlands University, April 2008 - August 2010

Primary duties included working with the University President to design and oversee financial and administrative functions. Also, helped design and implement capital projects and plans.

- Worked with the University's Administrative team to plan, coordinate and implement all major financial and administrative functions including the Business Office, the Budget, Purchasing, Information Technology and the University Police Department.
- Accomplishments included the development of financial reports, sound finances, funding to expand the Career Services Office, and the completion of several public works projects including the redevelopment of the Lora Shields, Burriss Hall, the University Swimming Pool Facility, Safety infrastructure, and campus landscaping and beautification.

Dean for School of Business, New Mexico Highlands University, summer 2005 - April 2008

Primary duties included working with the faculty and NMHU Center Directors to continuously review its curriculum, scheduling of classes to meet students' needs, review and execution of the department budget to improve classrooms and equipment. Collaborated with Center Directors on providing necessary courses at remote locations.

- Worked with faculty to prepare for the school's re-accreditation. Also regularly taught undergraduate and graduate economics courses and advised many students.
- Accomplishments included an updated curriculum, a regular class schedule that students could follow to completion, and re-accreditation for the school, and movement towards a totally on-line MBA program.

Assistant Director for Fiscal Policy, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, 2003 - 2005

Worked with LFC and Executive agencies' staff to prepare short-term and medium term revenue and expenditure forecasts, analyses of tax policy issues, and fiscal impact reports.

- Researched and presented reports to the Legislative Finance Committee and other legislative committees on fiscal issues and other economic and policy issues.
- Volunteered to assist the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and other organizations with international and national training and education efforts. These efforts included:
 - ✓ Seminar for the new members of the Sudanese National Assembly from the Southern Sudan on policy analysis, budget analysis and natural resource tax revenues.
 - ✓ Seminar for Algerian National Assembly staff on policy analysis.
 - ✓ Seminar for the Hawaii Legislature's finance committees on performance-based budgeting;
 - ✓ Seminar for Arabian Gulf States on public policy research methods and presentation.
 - ✓ Seminars for the Mali and Benin legislature on the legislative role in budget preparation.

Budget Advisor to Government of Senegal, Office of Technical Assistance, United States Treasury, 2001 - 2003

Worked in the Senegalese Ministry of Finance with the Minister of Budget, the General Director of Finances and Budget Director to design and implement a results-based medium term budget framework.

- Consulted with the diplomatic community, including the U.S. Embassy, other diplomatic missions and international financial agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to coordinate technical assistance efforts oriented towards government finance reforms.

Chief Economist, New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, 1995 - 2001

Worked with LFC and Executive agencies' staff to prepare short-term and medium term revenue and expenditure forecasts, analyses of tax policy issues, and fiscal impact reports.

- Coordinated performance-based budgeting effort for Legislative Finance Committee. Responsibilities included acting as liaison to executive branch budget office, staff training, and development of legislative action plan.
- Prepared performance-based budgets for the Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Child Support and Workforce Development programs.
- Identified policy issues related to assigned programs; prepare reviews and evaluations; presented findings in testimony to Legislative Finance Committee and other interested organizations.

- Prepared 5-year current services expenditure forecasts for the state's general fund that is used along with the 5-year revenue forecast for long-term fiscal planning purposes.

Economist, City of Albuquerque, 1991 - 1993

- Researched the costs and revenue impacts of proposed city developments; developed fiscal impact model.
- Prepared revenue and expenditure trends and forecasts.

Director of Administration and Assistant to Commissioner, Department of Economic Development, City of Chicago, 1984 - 1989

- Advised the Commissioner on issues related to development and planning issues in Chicago.
- Directed preparation of department's budgets and developed policies for the use of tax incentives.

Peace Corps Volunteer, Trainer and Recruiter, United States Peace Corps, 1974 - 1983

- Served as rural development volunteer in West Africa and Chile.
- Trained new volunteers for rural development work.
- Served as a Professional Recruiter for the Southwest United States.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Conducted major studies for the Legislature, while serving as the Assistant Director for Fiscal Policy and Chief Economist at the Legislative Finance Committee. These studies took the form of legislative briefs and fiscal impact reports:

- Working with staff from the Higher Education Department and the University of New Mexico, conducted a review of other states' higher education academic program initiatives.
- Study on the economic and fiscal consequences of Indian Gaming (circa 1997). The research developed for this report served as the basis for my Ph.D. dissertation.
- Study on the New Mexico Lottery Scholarship (Circa 1996). Reported prepared with legislative analysts, Cathy Fernandez and Antoinette Pacheco. Among other things, the report indicated that the lottery scholarship program structure was not financially sustainable over the long-run.
- Study and development of policy related to national welfare reform and its implementation in New Mexico (Circa 1996).
- Study related to Governor Bill Richardson's tax reform agenda, including the repeal of the Food Tax (2004). Analyses focused on revenue implications as well as tax policy concerns.
- Study and Report prepared with LFC Analyst Mark Valenzuela on Governor Bill Richardson's infrastructure program (2004).
- Report to the Legislative Finance Committee on class size and learning outcomes. This report focused on research from Tennessee's STAR program, which greatly reduced class sizes in early grades and seemed to result in better learning outcomes.
- Study and Report prepared with LFC Analyst, Mark Valenzuela on the Rail Runner, a light rail project linking Albuquerque and Santa Fe. The report highlighted the likely financial problems that the Rail Runner would face.

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY AWARDS

- Formal recognition from the State of New Mexico's House of Representatives and the New

Mexico Senate for thoughtful, fair analysis of difficult policy issues facing the state.

- Recognition and awards for several historic renovation projects completed in the City of Las Vegas, NM.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Fluent in Spanish and French
- Extensive public speaking skills