

Steve Elliott
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Wayne State College

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South Dakota Board of Regents
306 E Capitol Ave #200
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Executive Director Lukkes,

I have reviewed the leadership profile for the President position at Black Hills State University, and I am excited about the opportunity to learn more about the campus and the Spearfish community. As a passionate supporter and advocate for the mission of comprehensive regional public universities, I am writing to formally apply for the President position with the confidence these supporting materials reinforce my range of ability, and future possibilities.

I currently serve as the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Wayne State College, a comprehensive regional public institution in Northeast Nebraska, where I am responsible for 300 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, a \$50M annual budget, and a growing enrollment of more than 4700 students. Prior to my initial faculty appointment at Wayne State in 2003, I earned my terminal degree (MFA) from the University of Maryland, College Park. After earning tenure at Wayne State in 2008, I have served in three successive leadership roles during my twenty-year career: Five years as a Department Chair and Associate Professor, three years as a Dean and Full Professor, and seven years as Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Throughout my career in higher education I have been an avid supporter and advocate for students, faculty, and staff. Through positive interactions, shared governance, and consensus, we have built strong professional relationships based on trust, shared values, mutual respect, and credibility. As a role model and mentor, I am strongly committed to supporting our students, faculty, and staff to achieve their personal and professional goals. This requires us to keep an open, positive, and continual dialogue across the campus, with our alumni, and throughout our communities.

As a senior-level administrator I am responsible for ensuring that institutional effectiveness, enrollment management, and financial planning are comprehensive, on-going, data-driven decision-making processes involving all academic and organizational units. Student-centered enrollment management is one of my most critical responsibilities, and I am tasked with optimizing enrollment, managing institutional enrollment goals, and stabilizing persistence and completion rates.

After developing and employing a comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Plan, Wayne State's combined total fall enrollment has increased 44% over the past five years, and our fall cohort retention rates have stabilized above 70% for six consecutive years (currently 73%). The contemporary higher education financial landscape is dynamic, and these outcomes were achieved by being innovative, creative, and responsive to evolving workforce needs.

Financial acumen, budget management, and resource generation are essential to our success. While being actively involved with institutional budget and finance management initiatives, task forces, foundation development, and grant programs, our leadership team has successfully generated substantial gifts and grants, and met strategic budget priorities through fundraising initiatives. We recently surpassed a \$30M scholarship campaign goal, raising \$35.1M in new scholarships to date. The academic leadership team has also been awarded several major federal grants totaling more than \$5M over the past two years. Wayne State recently completed the construction of a new \$15M Center for Applied Technology, a \$9M renovation for Education and Behavioral Sciences classrooms and office spaces, and celebrated the groundbreaking for a \$12M renovation and addition to the Fine and Performing Arts Center through a combination of private gifts, grants, state support, and cash funds. My involvement in engaging our constituents, alumni, faculty, staff, and donors was crucial to completing these projects.

During the past five years we have also made substantial improvements to our Wayne State student experience, including major facility renovations, a new Freshman Advising and Transfer Center, increased experiential learning opportunities, and enhancements to our Honors Program and Academic Success Center. We also created more than twenty new academic programs, expanded our degree offerings, and forged strong partnerships between athletics, student government, clubs, and student organizations. As a member of the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC), I have a deep understanding, commitment, and appreciation for NCAA II intercollegiate athletics and our student athletes. I also understand the importance of optimizing the co-curricular opportunities available to all students.

Modeling a campus culture that values collegiality and collaboration requires us to be open to new ideas, different viewpoints, and fresh perspectives. While working closely with faculty, staff, students, regional stakeholders, and community leaders, I have cultivated longstanding relationships through my involvement with regional arts organizations, economic development corporations, chambers of commerce, school boards, government agencies, and city administrations and councils. Having an open-door/open-mind communication style has been integral to building trust and strong working relationships with these partners. Throughout the recent development of our 2022-2028 Strategic Plan and Campus Master Plan, I enjoyed the opportunity to bring faculty, staff, students, administrators, community members, school districts, businesses, industries, and alumni together to develop goals and strategies, identify key performance metrics, and assess our institutional outcomes to better serve our students and the community.

As I continue to collaborate with my counterparts, state system presidents, board members, and colleagues across Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota, I serve as both an advocate for Wayne State and as a partner to my peers as we work together to broaden access to affordable educational opportunities for students. As a result of these efforts, Wayne State has developed countless educational partnerships with businesses, industries, local governments, and educational leaders throughout our tri-state area and service region.

Black Hills State University has exciting potential, and I would be grateful for the opportunity to interview for the President position. As you can see from the application materials I have submitted, I am committed to the mission of comprehensive regional public universities. It would be an honor to work with the South Dakota Board of Regents and the Spearfish community to continue building Black Hills State University's outstanding reputation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at stellio1@wsc.edu or (402) 709-4552.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Elliott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" and "E".

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**Full academic CV available upon request*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Wayne State College

Wayne State is a comprehensive regional public institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and serves a student population of more than 4,700 students.

2016-Present Vice President for Academic Affairs
2013-2016 Dean, School of Arts and Humanities
2013-2016 Full Professor, Department of Art and Design
2013-2016 Director, Nordstrand Visual Arts Gallery
2008-2013 Chair, Department of Art and Design
2008-2013 Associate Professor (Tenured), Department of Art and Design
2003-2008 Assistant Professor, Department of Art and Design

EDUCATION

2003 M.F.A. (Terminal Degree), University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland
2001 B.F.A., University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas

BIRTHPLACE

1974 Quantico, Virginia

PRIOR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1993-1997 United States Marine Corps (Active Duty)

CURRENT POSITION

Vice President for Academic Affairs, Wayne State College

After earning tenure at Wayne State in 2008, I have served in three administrative leadership roles: Department Chair (five years), Dean (three years), and Vice President for Academic Affairs (seven years).

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS (2017-2023)

Strategic Plan

Since 2020 I have served as the Campus Lead for the Nebraska State College System Strategic Plan and System-wide Campus Facility Master Planning Committee, and Co-Chair of the Wayne State Strategic Planning Leadership Council. After a productive and engaging two-year process, Wayne State launched our new 2022-2028 strategic plan in spring 2022:

https://www.wsc.edu/info/20491/wsc_strategic_plan/1480/strategic_plan_2022-2028

Enrollment

- Chaired, developed, and facilitated a comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Plan, resulting in a 22% increase in degree-seeking enrollment at Wayne State over the past five years
- Increased total enrollment by 44% over five years
- Increased degree-seeking graduate enrollment by 51% over five years
- Increased total graduate enrollment by 71% over five years
- Stabilized undergraduate retention rates above 70% for six consecutive years

After leading, developing, and employing a comprehensive Strategic Enrollment Plan with faculty, staff, and administrators, Wayne State’s degree-seeking enrollment has increased by 22% over the past five years. During that same timeframe our combined total fall enrollments in all online, hybrid, and traditional modalities have grown by more than 44% (see table below).

FALL 2017	FALL 2018	FALL 2019	FALL 2020	FALL 2021	FALL 2022
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT
3306	3633	3890	4202	4580	4773

Between 2017 and 2022, Wayne State’s degree-seeking graduate enrollment increased by 51%, and combined graduate enrollments in all modalities grew by more than 71% (see table below).

FALL 2017	FALL 2018	FALL 2019	FALL 2020	FALL 2021	FALL 2022
GRADUATE ENROLLMENT	GRADUATE ENROLLMENT	GRADUATE ENROLLMENT	GRADUATE ENROLLMENT	GRADUATE ENROLLMENT	GRADUATE ENROLLMENT
535	658	742	762	814	913

Wayne State has also made substantial improvements to our student experience, including major facility renovations, a new Freshman Advising and Transfer Center, increased experiential learning opportunities, and a Freshman Year Experience funded through a Title III Federal Grant Program. As a result, our freshman cohort retention rates have stabilized above 70% for six consecutive years.

(RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, Continued)

Fundraising – Scholarships and Capital Projects:

- Exceeded a \$30M, five-year scholarship campaign goal as a member of the Wayne State Foundation Scholarship Campaign Steering Committee (\$35.1M in new scholarships raised as of FY 2023) <https://www.wsc.edu/scholarshipcampaign>
- Developed and facilitated the launch of a \$2.4M fundraising campaign for a \$12M renovation and addition to the Fine and Performing Arts Center (\$1.2M raised as of FY 2023). https://www.wsc.edu/homepage/454/peterson_fine_arts_renovation
- Completed the programming, development, and fundraising campaign for a \$9M renovation to the Benthack Hall instructional facility to transform classroom, office, and laboratory facilities into cutting-edge learning environments for programs in Education and Behavioral Sciences (2022)
- Completed the programming, development, and construction of a new \$15M Center for Applied Technology facility with the support of the City of Wayne and fundraising efforts with regional businesses and industries (2019)

Federal Grants Awarded:

During the past two years I have supported and facilitated the development of nine major grant projects with current awards totaling \$5.45 million. The grant project teams have been successful in securing funds for new FTE, retention initiatives, academic programs, scholarships, faculty development, instructional design, and capital improvements.

- 2022 HRSA Behavioral Health Workforce Education/Training (BHWET) (\$1.1M over 4 years)
- 2022 NSF Noyce Track 1 (\$1.2M over 5 years)
- 2022 NSF S-STEM Track 1 (\$750K over 4 years)
- 2021 Title III Program - Strengthening Institutions (\$2.1M over 5 years)
- 2021 DOJ OVW Campus Safety and Security Grant (\$300K over 3 years)

Federal Grants in Progress/Submitted:

- 2023 NEH Division of Education Program HICU (up to \$150K over 3 years)
- 2023 NSF Building Research Capacity in Biology (\$500K)
- 2023 NSF Experiential Learning for Emerging and Novel Technologies (\$1M over 3 years)
- 2023 SAMHSA Suicide Prevention (\$306K over 3 years)

Federal Grant Partnerships Awarded:

- 2020 Education Innovation and Research Grant (STEAM/PK-12 collaboration with Educational Service Unit #2 in Fremont, NE)
- 2019 Niobrara Cultural Awareness Through Education Grant (graduate education partnership with Educational Service Unit #2 and the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska in Niobrara, NE)

(RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, Continued)

New Academic Programs:

Since 2017 I have successfully led the academic leadership team through the development of more than twenty new academic programs and partnerships, and worked closely with faculty to design a new outcomes-based General Education Program. These new programs are designed to address high need areas in business and industry and support workforce and economic development in Northeast Nebraska.

- Northeast Nebraska Growing Together Cooperative Education Program: <https://www.wsc.edu/growtogether>
- Rural Law Opportunities Program: <https://www.wsc.edu/rlop>
- New General Studies Program: https://www.wsc.edu/info/20010/academics/22/general_studies_program
- Master of Science Degree in Special Education (online)
- Master of Science/Master of Arts Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies
- Bachelor of Science Degree in Engineering Technology
- Master of Science Focus Areas: Athletic Administration, Cross-Curricular Education
- Master of Science in Organizational Management Focus Areas: Criminal Justice Administration, Public Administration Management, Human Performance/Wellness Management, Public Relations
- Master of Business Administration Focus Areas: Public Accounting, Supply Chain Logistics, Human Resources Management
- Undergraduate Concentrations: Agricultural Communication, Digital Film Production, Manufacturing Management, Manufacturing Occupations, Safety Occupations, Supply Chain Logistics, Fermentation Science, Integrated Technology Support
- Reverse-transfer programs: Bachelor of Science degrees in Technology, Agricultural Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Applied Science – Agriculture, Plant Biology – Ecology and Management
- Accelerated programs: Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Master of Science in Athletic Training, Master of Science in Public Health

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS, LECTURES

Over the past twenty years I have delivered more than forty presentations at conference and association venues. The following panel presentation focused on student success in General Education at the Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference:

- 2019** General Session Panel Presenter (General Education): “Designing a Student-Centered Framework”, Higher Learning Commission Annual Conference, Chicago, Illinois

CURRENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Vice President for Academic Affairs, Wayne State College (2016 to Present)

Reporting to the President, provide leadership and oversight for the following:

- \$50M annual budget, in addition to fundraised, grant, and capital project funds
- 300 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, and enrollment of more than 4500 students
- Enrollment management, institutional strategic planning, and campus master planning
- Institutional management, institutional effectiveness, budgeting, planning, and evaluation
- Biannual budget development and initiatives through State Legislative Appropriations
- Sustainable partnerships with regional schools, colleges, organizations, and industries
- Scholarship fundraising campaigns, alumni and donor relations, and grant writing initiatives
- Programming and fundraising for building renovations and new construction projects
- Initiatives to increase enrollment, retention, persistence, and completion rates
- Community engagement through Service-Learning, outreach, and public events
- Assessment of student learning and institutional assessment planning for student success
- National accreditation/reaffirmation (HLC, CAEP, CACREP, IACBE, NASAD, NASM, ATMAE)
- Engagement in local, regional, state, national, and international organizations
- Collaboration with faculty and staff through strategic partnerships and shared governance
- Faculty and staff professional development and engagement in professional activities
- Study Abroad Program (Costa Rica, Greece, Ecuador) and international agreements
- Career services, internships, experiential learning, and the Cooperative Education Program
- Campus crisis management, emergency preparedness, and conflict resolution
- Behavioral intervention and individualized student success planning

PRIOR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities, Wayne State College (2013-2016)

Reporting to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, provide leadership for the following:

- \$5M budget, in addition to program revenue, fundraising, and endowments
- Supervision of 80 full-time and part-time faculty and staff within a school of 450 majors
- Programming for the Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts Series (100+ annual events)
- Leadership in national accreditation and reaffirmation processes (NASAD, NASM, HLC)
- Collaboration across campus disciplines through the development of strategic partnerships
- Safety oversight and responsibility for programs with highly specialized facilities and needs
- Provide support for faculty and staff professional development and professional activities
- Fundraising, capital campaigns, alumni and donor relations, and grant writing initiatives
- Prepare budgetary proposals for staffing, operations, and new program initiatives
- Community engagement through Service-Learning, outreach, and public events
- Program and institutional assessment planning, reporting, and digital portfolio development
- Partnerships with regional schools, colleges, organizations, and industries
- Establishment of the Jeanne Gardner Black and Gold performing arts endowment (\$500,000)

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

My large-scale sculptures and mixed-media works have been included in more than one hundred exhibitions and collaborations in twenty-six states, including ARC Gallery (Chicago, Illinois), 516 ARTS (Albuquerque, New Mexico), Mid-America Arts Alliance (Kansas City, Missouri), Joslyn Art Museum (Omaha, Nebraska), the Sioux City Art Center (Sioux City, Iowa) and the Manoa Art Gallery (Honolulu, Hawaii). The following represents exhibitions and acquisitions during the past five academic years.

- 2023** *Annual Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, Wayne, Nebraska. Curator: City of Wayne Public Art Committee (regional juried outdoor exhibition)
- 2023** *16th Annual Juried Visual Arts Exhibit*, Norfolk Arts Center, Norfolk, Nebraska. Juror: Eddie Dominguez, University of Nebraska, Lincoln (regional juried exhibition)
- 2023** *Wayne State College Outdoor Sculpture Collection*, Wayne State College, Wayne, Nebraska
- 2022** *Annual Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, Wayne, Nebraska. Curator: City of Wayne Public Art Committee (regional juried outdoor exhibition)
- 2022** *Wayne State College Outdoor Sculpture Collection*, Wayne State College, Wayne, Nebraska
- 2021** *ARTcetera*, Sioux City Art Center, Sioux City, Iowa (invitational group exhibition)
- 2021** *Sculpture Exhibition*, Norfolk, Nebraska. Curator: Norfolk Area Visitors Bureau (national juried outdoor exhibition)
- 2021** *Annual Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, Wayne, Nebraska. Curator: City of Wayne Public Art Committee (regional juried outdoor exhibition)
- 2020** *Sioux City Art Center Selects*, Sioux City Art Center, Sioux City, Iowa. Curator: Al Harris-Fernandez, Sioux City, Iowa (regional juried exhibition)
- 2020** *Sculpture Exhibition*, Norfolk, Nebraska. Curator: Norfolk Area Visitors Bureau (national juried outdoor exhibition)
- 2020** *Norfolk Arts Center 13th Annual Juried Show*, Norfolk, Nebraska. Juror: Eric Sterns, Doane University, Crete, Nebraska (regional juried exhibition)
- 2019** *2019-20 Sculpture Exhibition*, Norfolk, Nebraska. Curator: Norfolk Area Visitors Bureau (national juried outdoor exhibition)
- 2019** *Norfolk Arts Center 12th Annual Juried Show*, Norfolk, Nebraska. Juror: John Fronczak,
- 2018** *ARTcetera*, Sioux City Art Center, Sioux City, Iowa (invitational group exhibition)
- 2018** *2018 Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition*, Sioux City, Iowa. Curator: Sculpt Siouxland Board/Sioux City Art Center (national juried group exhibition)

SELECTED CORPORATE AND MUSEUM PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

- Sioux City Art Center Permanent Museum Collection, Sioux City, Iowa
- Fred Clark, Clark Creative Group, Omaha, Nebraska (graphic design firm)
- Doug Palmer, CEO, Tegra Corporation, Sioux City, Iowa (Palmer Candy)
- Nucor Steel Public Art Collection, Norfolk, Nebraska (Nucor Corporation)
- PLaN Architecture LCC Corporate Collection, Sioux City, Iowa (architecture firm)
- Cy W. and Karen Chesterman Collection, Sioux City, Iowa (Coca-Cola Co.)
- State of Nebraska One Percent for Art, Wayne, Nebraska (Public Art Commission)

SELECTED SERVICE

The following highlights selected ongoing service to higher education, the state of Nebraska, local and regional communities, arts, culture, and humanities organizations.

- Providence Medical Center Board of Directors, Wayne, NE (2023-Present)
- Institutional Development Award Program (IDeA) Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence Steering Committee, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE (2023-Present)
- Providence Medical Center Board Quality Committee (2023-Present)
- Co-Chair, Wayne State Strategic Planning Council (2020-Present)
- Nebraska State College System Facility Master Planning Committee (2020-Present)
- Nebraska State Humanities Government Relations Committee (2020-2022)
- Campus Lead, Nebraska State College System Strategic Planning Council (2019-Present)
- Wayne State Foundation Scholarship Campaign Committee (2019-Present)
- Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities Development Committee (2019-2022)
- City of Wayne Public Art Committee, Wayne, NE (2019-Present)
- Niobrara Cultural Awareness Advisory Council, Norfolk, NE (2019-Present)
- Chair, Nebraska State Humanities Finance Committee, Lincoln, Nebraska (2018-2020)
- Treasurer, Nebraska State Humanities Council, Lincoln, Nebraska (2018-2020)
- Nebraska Agriculture and Natural Resources Compact Committee (2018-Present)
- Wayne Area Economic Development Board, Wayne, NE (2017-Present)
- Chair, Wayne State General Studies Advisory Committee (2017-Present)
- Co-Chair, Wayne State Budget Advisory Task Force (2017-Present)
- Wayne State College President's Council for Diversity (2017-Present)
- Advisory Board Member, John G. Neihardt Foundation, Bancroft, NE (2016-Present)
- Nebraska State Humanities Council Board Member, Lincoln, NE (2016-2022)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Millennium Leadership Initiative

As a member of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) Millennium Leadership Initiative, I was awarded the opportunity to work closely with current and retired presidents to gain valuable insights into the role of a president throughout this leadership development program during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years.