

CARLA M. MARTIN, J.D.
Pine Bluff, Arkansas

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December 2, 2024

Dr. Kim R. Bobby and Dr. Carlton Brown
AGB Search
1666 K Street NW
Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20006

RE: University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Chancellor Search

Dear Dr. Bobby, Dr. Brown, and Members of the Search Committee:

I am writing as a follow up to the email communication received from Mr. Brian Desmond notifying me that I had been nominated for the position of Chancellor of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Please accept this communication from me as confirmation of my interest in the position and my deep desire to lead this institution, my alma mater, into a new era of growth, innovation, and success. As a proud alumna of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, I am intimately knowledgeable about the transformative role Historically Black Colleges and Universities play in shaping leaders and driving societal progress. As a longstanding advocate for HBCUs, especially the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, I am deeply committed to fostering academic excellence, advancing institutional growth, and creating opportunities for underserved communities. In the attached curriculum vitae, you will find extensive experiences, both past and present, in higher education administration, strategic leadership, and community engagement, which uniquely position me to lead the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff into its next chapter of success.

In my current role as Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, I oversee the strategic planning and management of the institution's fiscal resources, human resources, and operational infrastructure. Over the past decade, I have worked tirelessly to enhance financial stewardship, prioritize student success initiatives, modernize facilities, and ensure compliance with state and federal regulations – all while aligning resources to support the University's mission as a land-grant institution. As the University's Chief Financial Officer, I am proud of several notable achievements reflected below:

- Δ Migrated the University's finance, procurement, and human capital records to a new Enterprise Resource Planning system (Workday);
- Δ Raised the minimum salary to a livable wage of \$30,000 for all entry level positions;
- Δ Secured over \$23,000,000 in grants for the creation of new and modernization of current campus facilities;

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- Applied Health Building – New
- Hazzard Building – Modernization
- L.A. Davis Student Union – Modernization
- Bell Tower - Modernization
- △ Secured bond financing for the \$33,000,000 Student Engagement Center;
- △ Created a department to aid employees and students with Title IX related concerns which resulted in increased awareness of Title IX resources;
- △ Secured a travel vendor to decrease University expenditures on travel;
- △ Instituted various lunch and learn series to increase professional development for employees;
- △ Supported the Higher Learning Commission accreditation team during the University’s Comprehensive Evaluation and Mid-Cycle Assurance Argument;
- △ Developed the Campus Master Plan;
- △ Collaborated with the campus for two (2) Strategic Plans;
- △ Strategized plans that prioritized student and employee safety during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, campus closures due to extreme weather conditions, and other emergency response efforts;
- △ Negotiated new food service vendor contracts to include Pine Bluff’s first Chick-fil-A;
- △ Implemented policies and procedures to eliminate improper credit card usage and allow for convenient lodging while traveling: and,
- △ Successfully managed the University’s budget of over \$75,000,000 amid enrollment declines and decreased state funding to ensure the continuous operations of the University.

These efforts reflect my commitment to creating a sustainable foundation for institutional growth and development.

My tenure as Dean of the School of Business and Management at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff demonstrates my ability to foster academic innovation and successfully drive accreditation efforts. Under my leadership and a first in the history of the business program, the school achieved the prestigious ACBSP accreditation, ensuring rigorous standards of teaching, learning, and research. As Dean, I was responsible for strengthening the core of the business program by teaching students, coordinating the school’s academic and administrative operations, developing budgets, and managing the school’s fiscal affairs, recruiting faculty, fundraising, and engaging with community and business leaders. Under my leadership, the School of Business and Management also received its first grant from the Globalizing HBCU Business Schools Program to create a Business Administration concentration in International Business. To strengthen the student’s international exposure, I collaborated with the Office of

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International Programs and Studies and presented a proposal to the Fulbright Foundation that secured U.A.P.B.'s first Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant and I encouraged business majors to study abroad via that Office of International Programs and Studies. These accomplishments were fueled by my commitment to recruiting experienced faculty, improving student retention, and developing meaningful partnerships with business leaders and civic organizations.

My leadership efforts have often extended beyond the Division of Finance and Administration and the School of Business and Management into the campus as a whole. During my tenure, I have given leadership to multiple campus committees and initiatives as appointed by the Chancellor. I also served as advisor to the Student Government Association because I am an advocate for our students. My professional experiences have further sharpened my skills in stakeholder engagement and strategic planning – all of which I will bring to the role of Chancellor.

Prior to academia, my professional skills were honed at the world's largest retailer, Walmart Stores, Incorporated. There I served in two very different capacities. First, as a Realty Transactions Manager, where I negotiated and closed over 75 contracts for the sale of excess land surrounding Walmart Supercenters. In this position, I received the Top Performer Award for exceeding expectations and setting higher standards for the Realty Division. Later, I transitioned to Senior Manager of Supplier Diversity, an operations role where I had the privilege of identifying new and diverse suppliers as well as working with over 2,500 current minority- and women- owned businesses to sustain and/or increase their engagement with Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. These various roles and responsibilities increased my understanding regarding the importance of navigating and understanding the "corporate culture," creating corporate strategy, and having strong interpersonal skills to successfully work with outside attorneys, internal buyers, and external suppliers. Additionally, I am a licensed attorney in the state of Arkansas with over 20 years' experience. Having previously practiced law at a private firm in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, I managed a case load of over 150 active cases each year. Understanding the landscape of the community, developing relationships with individuals from all walks of life, advocating effectively and efficiently on behalf of my clients were all roles that were fine-tuned when I engaged in the practice of law. My experiences in academia and at Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. have been very different from private practice. Nevertheless, each opportunity has strengthened my leadership skills as well as intensified the overall expectation and implementation of hard work, relationship building, analytical thinking, and strategic planning – all critical qualities needed by the next leader of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

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When deciding to return to Pine Bluff with my family in 2009, it was because I believed I could make a positive difference in this community. When I affiliated myself with the University of Pine Bluff, I also aligned my “free time” with the organizations that were meaningful to me and impactful in the city. I spent time with the Chamber of Commerce rising to the position of Chairman of the Pine Bluff Regional Chamber of Commerce. I am still a volunteer with United Way of Southeast Arkansas. In 2012, I served as the campaign chairperson leading the United Way campaign to raise \$1.28 million for the residents of Jefferson County. To date, this amount remains the largest amount raised in United Way of Southeast Arkansas history. In 2017, I chaired a public-private partnership that involved over 100 Jefferson County residents to create a strategic plan to address economic development, education, quality of life, and government/infrastructure. Appointed to the Arkansas’ largest healthcare insurance company board of directors, I am trusted to chair the Board’s Compliance Committee. As a native Pine Bluffian, I understand that as the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff succeeds, so does the city of Pine Bluff. I also understand that as the city succeeds, so does the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Leading the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff requires the ability to lead within the city of Pine Bluff and state of Arkansas. It also requires an ability to fundraise, network, collaborate, and strategize with alumni and other stakeholders, community leaders, and governmental officials. These experiences – working with the community, engaging with business and industry, and fundraising – have prepared me for this opportunity.

My careers as a practicing attorney, a Realty Transactions Manager, Senior Manager of Supplier Diversity, Dean of the School of Business and Management, and Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration have been invaluable in equipping me with the knowledge and skills that make me an excellent attorney, an academician, a business and finance executive, and, more importantly, an ethical human being. I understand the importance of organization and the intricacies of the academic environment. My exposure to the legal system has honed my problem-solving skills, and I have developed a keen insight, appreciation, and respect of people. My business acumen has equipped me to lead the university by balancing academic goals with financial realities, all while adapting to new educational technologies, and embracing operational efficiencies. I am aware of and appreciate the culture of this city. My perspective is unique due to my involvement on this campus, in this city, and with the constituents of each. It is my desire, and I would consider it an extreme honor, to offer my unique abilities and experiences to the entire University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff campus. I hope to intensify the great work that this University is doing both in the Delta Region and beyond. The opportunities are limitless when considering the ways in which we can positively

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impact the lives of students across the state of Arkansas and beyond.

As Chancellor, I will increase enrollment and retention by fostering a student-centered environment that supports academic success, personal growth, and career readiness. I will work to create new and attractive academic majors that align with emerging industries and the evolving needs of society, ensuring our graduates remain competitive in the global workforce. In an effort to strengthen the University's Core Value of Quality Customer Service, I will ensure that every applicant receives an electronic acknowledgment from the University within 48 hours of submitting an application. Additionally, I will implement efforts to improve employee morale and maximize operational efficiencies. I will prepare our campus for threats against cybersecurity, active shooters, and other potential security threats. Moreover, I will prioritize upgrading campus facilities, especially housing, to reflect modern standards of excellence, making our institution an appealing destination for students, faculty, and visitors. Additionally, I am passionate about building a thriving athletic program that not only enhances school pride and visibility, but also serves as a catalyst for community engagement and student recruitment. My vision is to establish a holistic approach to athletics that emphasizes academic achievement, character development, and competitive excellence. As a member of the Chancellor's Executive Cabinet, I have been devoted to supporting the vision as conceived by the University's Chief Executive Officer; however, I welcome the opportunity to utilize my leadership style to make the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff an institution of choice for students and employees.

Thank you for considering my application materials. I welcome the opportunity to further discuss my qualifications and professional experiences, and how my leadership philosophy aligns with the vision and goals of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. I can be reached at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].[.com](#). I look forward to the possibility of contributing to the legacy of excellence at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. Together, we can achieve a new era of preeminence and make a lasting impact on students, faculty, and community.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

Carla M. Martin, J.D.

Attachment