



OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

August 12, 2021

Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Search Committee
University of Colorado - Colorado Springs
1420 Austin Bluffs Parkway
Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

I am writing to apply for the position of Vice Chancellor for Diversity Equity and Inclusion. Over my career, I have accumulated a wide range of experience working as an advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion at two private liberal arts colleges and in a public university system. My most recent work as Chief Diversity Officer at SUNY Oswego builds on a decade of prior experience with strategic planning, programming leadership, policy administration, and collaboration with stakeholders to advance full participation on college campuses. This experience and my vision for moving the scope of diversity, equity, and inclusion forward make me an ideal candidate for the Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer position at University of Colorado - Colorado Springs. I am confident that I can work collaboratively with stakeholders at University of Colorado - Colorado Springs.

My philosophy of diversity centers on the concept and practice of *full participation*. Diversity involves positive recognition of differences in humankind that stem from racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds, sexual (affectional) orientation, religion, values, gender identity, age, ability, physical and mental characteristics, and socio-economic status. In an institutional context, I believe that diversity is integral to higher education's mission to enable both access and success for all individuals. *Access* is more than merely admission to college. It involves the creation of opportunity networks that enable success. *Success* entails more than graduation from college. It "involves building pathways to full social and economic citizenship" (Sturm, 2011). Institutions must provide access and promote success for all stakeholders including students, faculty, and staff through an architecture that includes but is not limited to nondiscriminatory systems, policies, structures, and practices on admissions, retention, religious or cultural observances, disability services, resource allocation, rights and responsibilities, and adjudication processes. In order for diversity to be fully realized, the institution's core priorities, operative values and assumptions (i.e., the values and assumptions that are revealed by and actually guide the institution's policies and

practices), structures, and day-to-day practices must reflect and be centrally informed by full participation. “*Full participation* is an affirmative value focused on creating institutions [and practices] that enable people, whatever their identity, background, or institutional position, to thrive, realize their capabilities, engage meaningfully in institutional life, and contribute to the flourishing of others” (Sturm 2010). I believe full participation provides a way of conceptualizing and operationalizing student, staff, and faculty diversity as a transformational force within communities on and off campus. My role, as well as the role of other stakeholders, is to create and maintain an institutional architecture of full participation. In my professional experience at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS), Centre College, and SUNY Oswego, including my work with institutional committees, consortia, community organizations, and student organizations, I have cultivated practices and organized initiatives that foster full participation and I have seen these practices bear fruit.

My commitment to realizing diversity, equity, and inclusion through full participation has guided my professional work and institutional service throughout my career. It led the SUNY Chancellor along with SUNY Senior Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives and SUNY System Chief Diversity Officer to select me to work with the leadership and community at SUNY Brockport on transformative practices. Most recently, I was again selected by the Chancellor along with the Senior Vice Chancellor to work alongside SUNY-wide Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) staff on implementing the Chancellor’s [25 point Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan](#).

At SUNY Oswego, I was tasked with implementing and updating a strategic diversity and inclusion plan created in 2015. Over the past three years, I have collaborated with members of the Oswego community on centralizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in community structures, processes, and practices. Working together, we have developed divisional and department DEI goals and assessment practices. Also, we have revised the guidelines and procedures for faculty and staff searches in order to centralize diversity and inclusion among the values driving the hiring process. In addition, I have worked with search committees to utilize data from the National Center for Education Statistics and IPEDS to the search process as a way to actively recruit candidates. This has led to increasing diversity of candidate pools. Also, I worked with the Provost on a successful proposal for SUNY Oswego to participate in the [PRODiG](#) initiative. My office also has an active role in ensuring the fairness of search practices and that minimum thresholds are established and maintained for diversity, equity, and inclusion search criteria.

Working with stakeholders across the institution, we have increased the frequency and range of diversity and inclusion training and programming available for faculty, staff, and students. This has included expanded training for Residence Life staff, Admissions staff, student organization leaders, department and program chairs, orientation leaders, EOP peer mentors, Auxiliary Services staff, University Police, etc. Most recently we announced our community-wide Grand Challenge: [Race, Racism, and Social Justice](#). For the next three years our stakeholders will engage deeply in community-wide anti-oppression work and education. Also, as a member of the General Education Council, I worked with faculty from across the institution to pass a major revision to our General Education curriculum by adding a required category and learning outcome, [Diversity, Identity, and Social Justice in the United States](#).

Over the past three years, I have built the Office of Diversity and Inclusion from a minimal staff consisting of myself and an administrative assistant to a full-time staff of four professionals and a graduate assistant. In addition, I have implemented a successful internship program with added opportunities for students to participate as a part of their Human Development major or Psychology major capstone courses. Most recently, I have worked with the Affirmative Action Officer on the design and planning for the new SUNY Oswego Institute for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Transformative Practice. The Institute will be a resource for the entire campus community to engage in activities that will increase student success, partnerships, and academic and creative excellence as SUNY Oswego continues to build an inclusive community and sustainable institution.

At Centre College, I served on and/or chaired several committees that have created a sustained architecture of inclusion through the crafting of inclusive institutional policies and assessment of institutional practice. For example, the Diversity and Community Committee completed a multi-year institutional diversity mapping project (a structural analysis of diversity and inclusion efforts, programs, and courses). In several major initiatives, I strove to enhance diversity and inclusion. In order to recruit and retain a diverse faculty and staff not only at Centre College, but across the state, I founded a regional HERC. I have also served as an institutional representative at annual Consortium for Faculty Diversity (CFD) conferences where I recruited candidates for faculty positions, conducted CV reviews, and mentored graduate students entering academia. This led to increased access and the inclusion of CFD Fellows in candidate pools while I was at Centre College and, earlier, at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. In promoting an inclusive campus at Centre, I developed a campus climate survey beginning with evaluation and best practices to establish criteria; identified and selected a provider; and worked collaboratively with stakeholders to create the survey. Also, I led another initiative, the Athletic Branding Taskforce, which undertook a thorough assessment of Centre's nearly century-old athletic branding and its impact on the campus climate. My diversity and inclusion work with students also emphasized equity and inclusion, especially Title IX programming, such as inaugurating Take Back the Night at Centre College, organizing speakers, and completing Green Dot training. My work at Centre College expanded the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and strengthened the role of the Chief Diversity Officer leading to that role's growth into the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion.

At Hobart & William Smith Colleges, I served on a major shared governance committee, the Committee on the Faculty. One part of my duties was to assess and evaluate academic policies including some key amendments to the Bylaws of the colleges and Faculty Handbook. In order to increase access and to diversify department and program candidate pools, I helped craft amendments that established data driven guidelines for inclusive job searches based on NSF demographic surveys of earned doctorates. These changes have resulted in diverse candidate pools and hires. Another way I promoted diversity and inclusion while a member of COFAC was advocating on behalf of diverse stakeholders (including students and faculty from under-represented populations). For example, I received feedback from underrepresented students that some stakeholders had limited awareness of experiences of racism on campus. Seeing this as an obstacle to recruitment, retention, stakeholder success, and the creation of a fully inclusive campus culture, I worked with the President, Provost and Dean of Faculty, Vice President for Student Affairs, and other allies to organize and facilitate discussions of experiences of racism on campus. Among the outcomes of these faculty and community dialogues were the creation of an online bias incident reporting system and the formation of the HWS Coalition on Race and Racism. These outcomes empowered underrepresented students and changed the ethos of the campus for all stakeholders. I

have similarly leveraged my roles at Centre College and SUNY Oswego to promote an inclusive campus climate. I have worked with campus stakeholders to develop programming (e.g., forums on Islamophobia, the experiences of undocumented peoples, supporting gender transitioning individuals, etc.) and to create policies and protocols (e.g., a new highly effective online bias reporting tool, gender-inclusive athletic policies, etc.). My work at Hobart and William Smith Colleges helped lay the foundation for their inaugural Chief Diversity Officer position and that position's evolution into the Vice President for Diversity Equity and Inclusion.

My work advancing full participation has also engaged the broader community. I have experience leading dialogue initiatives and diversity, equity, and inclusion training in larger community settings. I have also given several invited talks on social justice, institutional transformation, and cultural humility. In addition, I have done presentations on best practices at several conferences and participated in panel discussions on inclusion and positive social change.

In closing, I thank you in advance for your consideration of my application. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you further about the position and my potential contributions to University of Colorado - Colorado Springs. I would look forward to promoting full participation in collaboration with student leaders, staff, faculty, and other stakeholders, and coordinating initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion at UCCS, the city of Colorado Springs, and El Paso County .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rodmon King', written in a cursive style.

Rodmon King, PhD
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer
SUNY Oswego