

Dean, College of Education Search Committee
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs
1420 Austin Bluffs Pkwy Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I submit this application for **Dean of Education at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs**. I believe my leadership, teaching, and scholarly accomplishments, coupled with my over 25-year experience in higher education administration fit exceptionally well with the mission and vision of the University of Colorado Colorado Springs to advance knowledge, integrate student learning with the spirit of discovery, and broaden access to higher education. My reason in submitting my application for the Dean of the College of Education is my strong desire to be a member of your academic community that engages students in transformative education through active learning and scholarly research and connects theory to real world practice. My desire to work at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs is due in part to your goal of seeking a Dean committed to working in an environment that values collaboration, inclusion, and innovation, qualities in which I thrive. As Dean, I would support the work of the College, developing faculty collaboration and faculty talent, and preparing students for careers and lives of purpose in a more just, humane, and sustainable world. It is clear that the University of Colorado Colorado Springs and the College of Education work to foster a strong educational commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in a diverse learning community and I desire to be part of that environment.

Educational Excellence

As the Dean of Education, I would work diligently to form connections beyond the University of Colorado Colorado Springs by forging strategic partnerships with community and international leaders, business executives, school districts, government agencies, and non-profit sectors to identify specific ways the University of Colorado Colorado Springs and the CoE can serve as a resource to communities, and find ways to achieve mutually satisfying outcomes that benefit students. I am eager to help the University of Colorado Colorado Springs launch new programs, online, and certificates and to provide visionary leadership that promotes excellence in a well-rounded education. As Dean, I would strive to open pathways for faculty to excel in teaching, scholarship, and service, capitalizing on strengths and skillsets of faculty and staff. My goal would be to bring people within the College together to move forward in creating a joint vision.

Leadership Philosophy & Administrative Experience

Throughout my professional career, I have devoted significant leadership, time, and energy to issues surrounding the learning, growth, and development of students, faculty, and staff in higher education. The best way to describe my leadership style would be collaborative. As an administrator and academic leader, I employ Robert Greenleaf's Servant Leader Model to my work and recognize the importance of seeking the input of many people across departments and schools in order to strengthen team cohesion and to support the institutional mission of the campus. Two words that best describe my management and leadership style are innovative and entrepreneurialism. I'm seeking this Dean position in order to bring a creative and innovative approach to education at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs.

I have been an active administrator at both private urban, and state institutions. I have served as Department Chair at two universities for over 10 ½ years. Currently, at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, I led one of the largest faculty departments on campus and was then asked to launch a new department and start an inaugural clinical mental health counseling program, while

concurrently administering our Ph.D. program in Counselor Education and Supervision. Currently, I provide leadership in the department by creating programmatic policies and procedures, establishing course schedules, hiring full time and adjunct faculty, budget oversight, operations management, marketing and recruitment efforts, program assessment and accreditation, and facilitation of biweekly department meetings. During COVID, I helped our faculty transition to provide all remote/online teaching and academic advising and I have received training on instructional design as it applies to online learning. The COVID pandemic certainly has impacted education at all levels and I would work with faculty and lean into their expertise regarding how to create new teaching approaches and research examining the impact that education and behavioral sciences have experienced in the past few years. I believe my background as a licensed mental health counselor would offer the College of Education a unique skillset of leadership through a mental health crisis like COVID19, addressing issues of trust and vulnerability during challenging times in higher education. I am also an innovator through my scholarly work in developing culinary therapy – the use of cooking as a therapeutic tool in counseling and the behavioral sciences.

At Bridgewater State University in Massachusetts, in addition to being Department Chair, and Student Affairs Program Director for 13 years, in Spring 2015 I was appointed by our university president to serve as Interim Director of the Community Service Center where I supervised a professional staff of 6, including an Assistant Director, Administrative Assistant, staff associates and supervised graduate students who provided community service experiences and programs such as alternative spring break projects for both undergraduate/graduate students and faculty. In my role as Director, I aided students who were seeking experiential opportunities to enhance their formal academic programs. My CV outlines both my academic and professional experience that complements what the University of Colorado Colorado Springs is seeking in its next Dean of Education.

Strategic Planning and Corporate/Community Partnerships

In my role as a Governing Council Member in the American Counseling Association, I was a key part of helping our national organization create a strategic plan to guide our organization for the years to come and I am eager to bring these skills and vision to collaborating on a strategic plan for the College of Education in the years ahead. My work with development of the strategic plan included marketing, branding, and resource development. My skills in program planning, marketing, and strategic planning would transfer to my role as Dean. I have experience working closely with our Senior Director of Community Partnerships at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology to partner with community stakeholders. My goal as Dean would be to help support the strategic vision and core strategies of the UCCS 2030 Strategic Plan: Learning Engagement, and Belonging, Retention & Graduation, Research & Creative Excellence, Financial Strength & Deliberate Investment, Distinctive Programs, and Partnerships & Outreach. I would desire to help programs grow at a pace that is intentional, while maintaining quality in program delivery, and continuing UCCS's deep commitment to social justice, equity, and inclusion. In addition to my service on the Governing Council of the American Counseling Association, as Chair of the American Counseling Association Ethics Committee, I was tasked by our president with chairing a national task force to rewrite our association's code of ethics, which is used by hundreds of thousands of licensed counselors nation-wide.

Accreditation & Program Assessment Experience

As Chair, I have experience with leading the national counseling accreditation process at two institutions. As Department Chair at Bridgewater State University, I provided leadership in coordinating the CACREP (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) re-accreditation process to ensure that our curriculum, programs, and services align with national standards. In my current role as Chair, I helped lead our Clinical Mental Health Counseling program to receive 8-year full CACREP accreditation which went into effect in February 2020. In our Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, I helped lead the way to create an assessment plan and develop Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to assess student performance at all stages of their academic program.

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

As evidenced in my vita, I have extensive experience in my teaching and scholarship regarding diversity and inclusion efforts. I have served on DEI committees at every institution I have served at since 1993. In 2015, I was awarded the Bridgewater State University President's Award for Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice. Currently, I serve on the TCSP President's Diversity Advisory Council. In my work I integrate an intersectional lens when it comes to diversity which aids in recruitment, retention, and higher graduation rates for graduate students. In Fall 2019, I took an innovative approach to fostering learning in our students and brought together all of our master's and doctoral students to attend an art exhibit called *Envisioning Justice*, which focused on social justice and mass incarceration in Chicago and took our students in March 2022 to the Illinois Holocaust Museum to examine exhibits of the Holocaust and better understanding intergenerational trauma. I would work to bring these types of experiential learning opportunities to the College of Education students. As Dean, I would make it a priority to craft measureable outcomes in the area of diversity and social justice, as well as build on the efforts faculty and staff have already begun on addressing anti-racism, diversity, and social justice within the College of Education. I would seek to partner with faculty, staff, and students in the College to identify ways to integrate diversity and inclusion through socially just policies, learning practices, curriculum, student and faculty mentoring, faculty professional development, and other training opportunities to help reduce barriers for students, faculty, and staff of color and other underrepresented populations. Inclusion and social justice is not just a professional goal, but it is deeply imbedded in my personal identity as well.

Enrollment and Admissions

As Chair, I have focused extensively on student recruitment and retention efforts, including the creation of a master's and doctoral mentoring program and identify innovative ways to recruit new students. I created a system for conducting individual and group interviews, as well as launched a Student Ambassador program involving current graduate students who assist in Open Houses, Admissions Interviews, and Q&A student panels for prospective students. For the 2020-2021 Academic Year, as chair I facilitated our student recruitment efforts which led to a student enrollment increase of nearly 70% above our targeted enrollment goals for our program and for the 2021-2022 AY, my department surpassed enrollment goals for two years in a row. Bringing a creative and strategic approach to recruitment, I would work with the admissions staff at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs to ensure the best and brightest students, from diverse backgrounds, are given an educational opportunity to pursue their life-long professional goals.

Professional Skillset & Qualities

In reviewing the qualities you are seeking in your next Dean, I believe my skillset complements your desired criteria. As an administrator, I would bring to UCCS a blend of experience in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, a commitment to academic excellence, balanced with pragmatic operational skills. As Dean of the College of Education, a strength of mine would be to bring cutting edge thinking and creativity that bolsters utilization of current human and administrative resources. As an educator, I bring 20+ years of teaching experience in the disciplines of both counseling and student affairs/higher education. Attached is my vita for your review. I would be honored to serve the University of Colorado Colorado Springs in this role and to support the institutional mission at every level. Should you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (617) 913-1739 or mkocet@yahoo.com.

Sincerely yours,

Michael M. Kocet, Ph.D. LMHC, NCC, ACS

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