

November 29, 2016

Don Berg, Co-chair
Ernest Marshall, Co-chair
Presidential Search Committee
Bellarmino University
Louisville, KY 40205

Dear Chairs Berg and Marshall and Members of the Presidential Search Committee:

With great enthusiasm, I am applying for the position of president of Bellarmine University. The community described in the presidential profile is one that resonates with me, and I am convinced that my enthusiasm, experience, vision and appreciation for the mission make me an ideal fit for Bellarmine University. As you read through my materials, you will notice my entire professional career has been in Catholic higher education. Educating the whole person, body, mind and spirit, is a commitment that I take seriously and one that brings me great joy. My personal values are congruent with the stated values and mission, and I would be a passionate leader for Bellarmine University.

Few institutions have made more progress than Bellarmine University in the last twenty-five years. I have been a senior leader during a similar time of transformation at Loyola University Maryland. I served as the acting president of Loyola last fall semester and for the past six years as the executive vice president, which is second in command to the president. The last five institutional strategic plans have catapulted Loyola into becoming a leading Catholic comprehensive university.

I was a key administrator in the effort to become a regional and residential liberal arts college, and as planned, our residential population doubled in size. My leadership continued to impact several strategic plans in which Loyola achieved Phi Beta Kappa, AACSB accreditation for the business school, Messina—a comprehensive living and learning program, a diverse student body, faculty and staff, a student-centered student development program, a nationally ranked athletic program and many other markers of excellence. Loyola ranks consistently in the top five in the Northeast region in the *U.S. News and World Report*.

Rankings can vary from time to time, but mission driven institutions focus on strategic initiatives aimed at improving academic excellence, the student experience, and the level of community engagement. Catholic universities should provide an anchor to our cities and commit to educating students to be men and women for and with others. Louisville needs what Bellarmine provides through mission based initiatives. Our mission calls us to be a shelter in the storm of indifference, a beacon of hope for justice, a path out of poverty, and a companion to the disenfranchised people at the margins. This transformation of the heart happens through our teaching, scholarship, meaningful service and civic engagement.

My leadership of the mission offices and external affairs provides great opportunities to demonstrate how the University can positively impact our adjacent neighborhoods and the city by working with our neighbors and civic leaders. I take great pride in advocating for a farmers' market created in one of our parking lots in the summer, the afterschool and recreational programs for the children and the interdisciplinary graduate clinic serving school children and people of all ages in speech pathology, counseling and diagnostic services related to brain injuries and learning disabilities.

I am a leader who embraces the Catholic mission, and I find the readings of Thomas Merton to be particularly enlightening. The engagement of each student in his/her own personal journey of the discovery of self and others is an exciting and profound concept for students of all ages. All academic and co-curricular programs should be a part of this journey. Educating our students to be ethically engaged civic leaders is primary to the success of our mission.

My resume outlines more specifically my experience and qualifications, but I would like to address **the opportunities and challenges** presented in the presidential profile.

Articulate and promote a vision for Bellarmine University's future. The unique mission of Bellarmine University speaks to my own commitment to and interest in social justice and the Catholic mission of the institution. Throughout my career, I have continued my own obligations to community service and justice. Personal congruence with the values of the institution is an important aspect of my vocation. I speak from experience as a leader who is passionate about the mission and enjoys persuading others to engage and support the mission.

As acting president, I faced several crises including a student protest regarding racial injustice, the safety of 17 students who were studying abroad in Paris during the bombings, and a budget deficit due to a decline in first year student enrollment as a result of the uprising in Baltimore the previous spring. As a leader, I appealed to the members of the campus community to assist with our institutional responsibility to address these issues, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. My vision for Bellarmine's future would be optimistic, realistic and collaborative. These times are not for the faint of heart, but we must move boldly forward to further distinguish Bellarmine University as an innovative, thoughtful and nimble liberal arts university.

Observe and analyze the institution's current academic activities, and develop a strategy that facilitates the creation of compelling and innovative programs while also promoting the integration of teaching and research. Teaching and research are at the core of Bellarmine. The relationships between students and faculty members are fundamental to transformational experiences. I was an influential decision maker in the creation of Messina, a living learning program created to engage first year students in academic seminars supported by an extra fourth hour of developmental programs. Eighteen new tenure track lines were created to support this comprehensive student experience. Early indicators demonstrate improved retention and engagement. Providing faculty development funds and support for cross disciplinary programs, team teaching, global understanding, pedagogy and scholarship are critical to maintaining a vibrant and dynamic classroom experience. My experience as a trustee at two other institutions has given me a breadth of understanding of different models of revenue generation through new

academic programs including online; hybrid; graduate programs in physical therapy, occupational therapy, and athletic training; and interdisciplinary undergraduate programs.

Foster and grow the life of the Bellarmine community. Visibility on campus and in the Louisville community would be a priority for me as president. This would not be new to me as I currently participate fully in the University through attendance of speakers, athletic contests, cultural events, mass, community meetings and alumni gatherings. Recently, I assumed greater responsibility for external relations with the city of Baltimore. I have extensive service on boards in the Baltimore community and have recently become much more engaged in civic efforts as well. My experience includes advocating for the institution at the local, state and federal levels and providing greater opportunities for students, our alumni and collaboration with other organizations.

Build a strong leadership team and promote transparency in communication. Building strong and diverse leadership teams is a skill that I have consistently demonstrated during my tenure. Building a great team of ethical leaders and maximizing the potential of each person is a particular strength of mine. I am known across the Jesuit and Catholic network as a leader who hires diverse and talented people, and I develop them as leaders. Over a dozen of my direct reports serve in vice president, executive vice president and chief of staff positions across the country.

My service includes chairing numerous senior level search committees including two academic vice president searches, one chief financial officer, one dean of education, one vice president for administration, one athletic director and numerous other searches. My experience as a trustee at two other institutions, the president of a national professional association and my service as a board member on senior health care organizations have provided insight into governance, hiring and strategic planning. I am responsible for supporting the mission and athletic committees of the Loyola Board of Trustees. I am an active participant in the board's finance committee meetings as well. I also served on trustee committees for academic affairs, marketing, admissions and the executive committee of the Wheeling Jesuit Board of Trustees and Buena Vista University.

Secure the University's future financial strength and stability while balancing the increasing costs of higher education and affordability and access. In recent years, I have participated in and overseen several processes that have engaged the community in shared governance processes to assess strengths, resources and staffing for academic departments, administrative and staff rightsizing, budget reductions, reallocation and the generation of new revenues. My personal philosophy of subsidiarity, or lowering decision making to the lowest level possible, helps to provide ownership, develops leadership at all levels of the organization and maximizes opportunities for funding strategic priorities. During my tenure as president, I was able to announce the elimination of our vice president of administration position and to redistribute the work to the remaining vice presidents. My leadership would ensure that Bellarmine University develops the appropriate financial underpinnings necessary for sustained excellence. Funding depreciation, building the endowment, ensuring steady enrollment growth and diversifying revenues are key to financial and institutional stability.

Strengthen philanthropic support from, and outreach to, alumni and the Louisville community. As my resume indicates, I have extensive fund raising experience as interim vice president, acting president and executive vice president. I supervise the advancement vice president, and I have worked closely with the Bright Minds Bold Hearts 100 million dollar campaign at Loyola. I take pride in securing five one-million dollar gifts as interim vice president and acting president and in my role in the cultivation and stewardship of many other major donors. Likewise, I have been a frequent speaker at alumni and fund raising events. I would work with the vice presidents and the Board of Trustees to develop relationships among Bellarmine alumni and friends and the Louisville corporate and civic community.

I trust this letter conveys to you my enthusiasm and interest in serving as Bellarmine University's next president. I am a creative collaborative leader who urges everyone to reach their potential. I look forward to getting to know you the chairs and members of the search committee and the institution. I am happy to answer any questions related to my application or candidacy. My life has been molded by the experience I have had working at Catholic institutions, and I know that I am prepared to lead Bellarmine University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan M. Donovan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Susan M. Donovan, Ph.D.