

# **DR. BERNELL HIRNING**

## **COVER LETTER**

January 18, 2018

Dear Search Committee:

### **PRESIDENT-MAYVILLE STATE UNIVERISTY**

It is with great enthusiasm that I provide a letter of interest, current resume, and list of professional references, in application for the President vacancy at Mayville State University. The position was posted on Mayville State's website, and on the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Mayville State University, and the State of North Dakota, hold a special place in my heart. I was born, raised and educated in the Peace Garden State, and in the early years of my career in education, I served as an educator and coach at the high school and university levels. Now, after more than 16 years in higher education administration in California, I am excited for the opportunity to apply for the President vacancy at Mayville State, the institution that started my path in higher education nearly 20 years ago.

The North Dakota Higher Education System was instrumental in framing my educational background. I completed an Associate's Degree at Williston State College (UND-Williston at that time), then transferred to Minot State University to complete my Bachelor's degree. After a wonderful seven years of teaching Business and coaching basketball at Turtle Lake-Mercer High School, I returned to Minot State to earn my Master's degree. Following completion of my Master's degree, I served as Assistant Professor of Business at Mayville State University, before moving on to a career in higher education administration with the National University System, in California.

The National University System, was founded in 2001, using the North Dakota Higher Education System as a model for development. In its current state, it consists of three universities, with the 26-campus, National University, serving as the flagship of the System. I currently serve a dual role with National University; Associate Vice President, overseeing a nine-campus region, plus Associate Regional Dean, overseeing a three-campus district. Working with the National University System, I've gained valuable experience regarding the intricacies of such a System, and thus understand the composition of North Dakota's Higher Education System, and understand the importance and value of cross-campus and cross-university collaboration.

In reviewing the 'Position Announcement' I was drawn to the mission and four core purposes for Mayville State. The following paragraphs will link my experience with these core values:

- 1.) Academic Programs and Services for Contemporary Career and Workforce Opportunities: My experience at National University has provided me the opportunity to experience leadership at various levels. First, at an individual campus, then at a three-campus district, and currently, overseeing a nine-campus region. With this broad-ranging experience, I was closely connected to both campus and university-wide faculty to assure the right mix of academic offerings were present at each campus, and that each campus was connected to the University's leadership in San Diego.  
A shared-governance approach to campus management, allowed faculty and staff at each campus to connect to the needs of their community and region, aligning their actions to the mission of the University as a whole. Appropriate levels of services, aligned with student demand, were implemented to provide students support from prospect to graduate, and ensure success in their endeavors.
- 2.) Collaborative Relations to Contribute to the Growth and Vitality of North Dakota: Relationship and partnership building has been a cornerstone during my time as an administrator for National University, and while at Mayville State. Through a collaborative effort with faculty members, we were able to create over 50 partnerships for academic program delivery. The partnerships included community colleges, city and local government, school districts, and businesses and organizations. The community college partnerships resulted in the offering of degree completion programs on the campus of the community college to best serve their student populations (similar to Mayville State's Distance Education offerings to Williston, Bottineau, Devil's Lake, and Wahpeton, and other degree completion programs that Dickinson State and Minot State offer at Bismarck State College.) Programs were delivered in a variety of formats including onsite, hybrid, and online.  
During my time at Mayville State, I was offered the opportunity to grow the Project Management curriculum for the University, by initially delivering it to State of North Dakota Information Technology Department, per a request from their leadership. The program evolved into the first-ever online course from Mayville State to State Government, and further added delivery formats in-person, in Bismarck, and via Distance Education to six remote locations throughout the State. The program was also delivered to businesses and organizations outside of Mayville State.  
As my resume indicates, I also serve or have served on a number of partnership boards and consortia for higher education and business. They've included Business Councils, community college advisory boards, Chamber of Commerce, United Way, etc. If selected as President, my intent would be to become equally as connected to the community, region, and state, by continuing Mayville State's membership on such boards.

- 3.) Flexible Programs, Instruction, and Student Services for the Individual: Delivering programs, instruction, and student services in a manner that best fits the needs of the individual student is vital to success. While at Mayville State, I have the opportunity to work with online course development and delivery, in-person instruction, offsite program delivery and instruction, and distance education delivery. That diversity of instruction and services was further developed while at National University, on a much larger scale. With 26 campuses throughout California, and over 30,000 students, the need for diversity in instruction and student services proved to be the normal course of business. Programs are delivered onsite, online, and hybrid, some with distance education technology. Services are available online and onsite to allow students to tailor the services to their needs, availability, and learning styles. This broad range of instruction and student service exposure would position me well to expand upon Mayville State's current level of service and options in these areas.
- 4.) Environment that Supports Creativity, Intellectual Curiosity, Lifelong Learning, and an Appreciation for Diversity: National University is a private, non-profit institution that prides itself upon the ability to pivot and adjust quickly to the ever-evolving needs of the higher education environment. Therefore, creativity, intellectual curiosity, lifelong learning, and diversity are at the core of the University's daily operations, and my daily work experience. As accreditation requirements change, I was an active member on the front lines of this change, through my leadership position, in serving on a number of accreditation committees to keep the University relevant and current for its student population. As a leader, I've encouraged and supported faculty and staff to be visionary in their academic and student servicing aspects to provide an exceptional student experience at every turn of their journey.

The unique structure of the National University System's student service model, which provides students a physical, touch-point with an advisor along every step of their academic journey has provided me the opportunity to manage and lead every aspect of this journey. In my Associate Vice President and Associate Regional Dean roles, I have direct campus supervision of the following departments: Outreach, Recruitment, Admissions, Financial Aid, Student Accounts, Credentials, Scheduling, and Student Resource Center. In this model, I'm able to stay connected with the student experience from prospect to graduate, and thus assure the highest level of quality throughout the entire student experience.

In summary, I am honored to have the opportunity to apply for, and be considered for, the position of President at Mayville State University. If you feel I have the qualifications, please contact me at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bernell Hirning, PhD

## **Dr. Bernell Hirning**

**E-mail address:** [REDACTED]

**Work Address:**

20 E River Park Place West  
Fresno, CA 93720  
[REDACTED]

**Home Address:**

[REDACTED]  
Fresno, CA [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

### **WORK EXPERIENCE:**

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY: Jan. 2002-Present

*Interim Associate Vice President; Associate Regional Dean*

- Provide administrative leadership over multi-campus operations of nine Northern California Campuses for National University; from Bakersfield to Redding; consisting over 7,000 students.
- Work collaboratively with executive leadership, and other regional leadership, to develop growth strategies for the university and the university system.
- Work collaboratively with Campus Faculty to assure a thriving culture of shared governance.
- Develop strategic, data-driven plans for regional and campus-level initiatives to align with System goals.
- Develop student-centered service strategies to maximize retention and completion rates.
- Create cohesive culture whereby intra-campus leadership works together to develop an exceptional student experience using common, systematically effective retention strategies.
- Created Student Resource Center, at the Campus level, to provide student in-person services for Student Retention, Tutoring, Career Service, and Alumni Relations.
- Develop employee recognition programs to highlight exceptional student service performance for both staff and faculty.
- Develop strategic outreach plans for regional campuses to connect with community colleges, government, business, and educational entities.
- Developed over 50 external partnership with community colleges, city and county governments, school districts, businesses, organizations, and non-profits, to deliver training and degree completion options tailored toward the needs of the organization.
- Develop, monitor, and control multi-million dollar budgets
- Perform market analysis for academic program development at the regional level; working collaboratively with Academic Deans for program implementation at Regional Campus levels.
- Create enrollment management and service strategies to allow campuses to rank at or near the top for retention university-wide.

- Develop long-term and short-term scheduling policies for onsite, offsite, and online programs.
- Revenue generation through conference services and national testing site administration. CLEP, TSA, PAN, etc.
- Operations management of plant and facilities. Worked with NU Facilities through two full remodels in Redding and Fresno.
- Organize and execute Open House and Alumni Events; recognizing distinguished alum from different disciplines each year.
- Recruiting, screening, interviewing, and hiring of staff and faculty, plus performance assessment evaluations.
- Low, single-digit turnover rate.
- University Committees and Presidential Commissions:
  - Presidential Commission for Strategic Enrollment Management
  - Presidential Commission on Online
  - Presidential Commission on Redundancy and Opportunities
  - Chaired Regional Operations Process Improvement Task Force
  - Chaired Exception Employee Recognition Program Committee
  - Vice President's Student Start Rate Task Force
  - Advisory Committee for Ed.D. program
  - Institutional Capacity and Review Committee for WASC visit
  - Distance Education Assessment Committee
  - iLinc Student Services Support Committee
  - iLinc Student Portal Committee
  - University Workplace Safety Committee
  - Provost's Workgroup on Retention and Remediation
- Community boards and organizations:
  - Central Valley Higher Education Consortium Board
    - Executive Committee Member and Governing Board Member
    - Twenty-seven colleges and universities in Central California consisting of private and public, two and four-year schools.
    - '15-to-Finish Initiative'
      - Effort in concert with Complete College America, to encourage students to carry a 15-unit load to graduate in a timely manner
  - Fresno Compact Board
    - Governing Board Member
    - Over 30 business and educational entities working collaboratively to provide training options for students to prepare them for the demands of the job market.
    - Degree Audit-Reverse Transfer Subcommittee

- In collaboration with Central Valley Higher Education Consortium, an effort between community colleges and four-year institutions to reverse-transfer units from four-year colleges and universities back to community colleges for degree completion.
  - FAFSA Completion Subcommittee
    - In collaboration with CVHEC, an effort to increase FAFSA completion rates of high school students preparing for college.
- Fresno Business Council Career and Technical Education Task Force
  - Business and higher education partners joining to improve the offerings of CTE to meet market demand.
- Cradle-2-Career Leadership Board-Fresno Area Strive
  - Organizations and higher education partners joining forces to improve society from birth to career.
- Fresno City College Business & Technical Education Advisory Board
- Shasta College EOPS Governing Board
- Shasta College Transfer Advisory Board
- City of Redding Budget Review Commission
- United Way Governing Board
- Redding Rotary
- Chamber of Commerce
- College OPTIONS Governing Board
- College OPTIONS Sustainability Committee
- College Quest Governing Committee
- Plus One Mentors

**MAYVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY**

*Assistant Professor of Business/CIS, Aug. 1998 – Dec. 2001*

Mayville, ND 58257

- Taught the following 300-400 level courses: Microcomputer Applications, Project Management (2 levels), Marketing, Consumer Behavior, MIS, Advertising/Promotions, Retailing, Organizational Theory, Business Policies
- Coordinator of university's Project Management curriculum. Developed a Project Management training program for North Dakota State Government employees. Over 125 state employees took part in training. Delivery was onsite, online, and distance (video conference) to six locations statewide
- Teacher of the Year Finalist two consecutive years

- Served as Public Address Announcer for Comet Basketball and Volleyball
- Served as a member of the Technology Planning Committee
- Served as a member of Title III Mentoring Committee
- Delivered four blocks of Blackboard (on-line course) training to Mayville State University faculty and staff
- Served as Faculty Senator representing Business/CIS Division
- Chaired nominating committee for faculty senate offices
- Served as member of committee for Administrative Assistant search for Business/CIS Division
- Served as member of committee for Asst./Assoc. Professor search for CIS Division
- Served as student academic advisor

**MINOT STATE UNIVERSITY**

*Graduate Assistant/Part-Time Faculty, Spring & Fall Semesters 1997*

Minot, ND 58701

- Taught courses in Business Information Technology Department while attending graduate school

**TURTLE LAKE-MERCER HIGH SCHOOL**

*Business Education/Basketball Coach, August 1989-May 1996*

Turtle Lake, ND 58575

- Department Chair and teacher of Business/Computer Department
- Developed department curriculum for accreditation visit
- Head Coach for Girls & Boys Basketball
- Region and District Basketball Coach of the Year
- Who's Who Among America's Teacher's

**EDUCATION:**

**CAPELLA UNIVERSITY**

Minneapolis, MN 55402

*Ph.D. in Organization & Management*

- Dissertation: Leadership Strategies for Implementing Online Education in Traditional Academia: A Phenomenological Study

**MINOT STATE UNIVERSITY**

Minot, ND 58701

*Master of Science in Management, Concentrations in Management*

*Information Systems and Organizational Studies*

MINOT STATE UNIVERSITY  
Minot, ND 58701  
*Bachelor of Science in Business/Vocational Education*  
*Minor in Coaching*

WILLISTON STATE COLLEGE (formerly UND-Williston)  
Williston, ND 58801  
*Associate of Arts in Accounting*

**ADDITIONAL TRAININGS:**

- Ritz-Carlton Legendary Service Training
- Professional Presentation Training Workshop by Sandra Young-White
- CAPE Certification Training
- Fred Pryor Seminar on Project Management
- IDOC training for on-line course development and enhancement
- Socratic Questioning & Critical Thinking Seminar by Dr. Jerry Nositch, University of New Orleans
- In-service on Critical Thinking sponsored by Bush Grant
- In-service on Campus Safety and Security