

March 5, 2013

Linda Mengelt, Director
Breckenridge Partners
1025 W. Everett Rd
Lake Forest, IL 60045

Dean of College of Liberal Arts Search Committee:

Please accept my application for the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University. My vita is attached. My references are available upon request.

From July 2011 to December 2011, I was Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Kansas State University. After serving in that capacity, I returned to the position of Associate Dean of the college, a position to which I was originally appointed in January 2009. Prior to this, I was Head of the Political Science Department at Kansas State University for six and a half years. Before becoming department head, I was the Assistant Director (6 years) and Director (3 years) of the Docking Institute of Public Affairs and a professor in the Department of Political Science at Fort Hays State University (joint appointment). I also spent four and a half years as an assistant professor of Political Science at Virginia Tech. I received my Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1989.

Administrative Experience

I started my graduate career in public administration with the intent of becoming a city manager. Even though my career plans changed, my interest in organizations and administration continues. My first real administrative experience came as Assistant Director and then Director of the Docking Institute of Public Affairs. In these capacities, I started a survey center, managed administrative budgets, employed classified and unclassified staff, and “kept the lights on” with research contracts and grant monies from federal, state, and local government agencies and not-for-profits.

When I became Head of the Political Science Department at Kansas State University, the department’s faculty members were regularly sparing, leading to much unrest. Over the course of a year, the faculty began to develop a sense of trust in me, leading them to become more productive and to agreeing to new standards for merit, tenure, and promotion. While restoring peace within the department, I began seeking new programmatic opportunities for my unit. In 2006-07, I worked with faculty members from Political Science and History to create an interdisciplinary MA and Ph.D. in Security Studies. With the help of congressional funding, we were able to hire six new tenure-track faculty members (three in Political Science), and six new graduate teaching assistants (three in Political Science). This investment in people and resources paid

dividends as both the MA and Ph.D. programs have exceeded our expectations. Security Studies now has 27 students in the MA program, 28 students in the Ph.D. program and according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, is ranked eighth in the nation for Ph.D. programs in international affairs and development.

I became Interim Associate Dean in January 2009. This appointment was originally slated to last no more than two years. However, a failed search for a new dean extended this interim appointment. My responsibilities as Associate Dean are broad and diverse. They include curriculum planning and development, reappointment and evaluation of department heads, review of departmental procedures documents, coordination of summer school, enrollment management, coordination of departmental program review and assessment of student learning outcomes, administration of the faculty awards process, oversight of the alumni magazine *A&S Letters*, and liaison with the Division of Continuing Education and the Office of International Programs.

As Associate Dean, I was able to streamline and improve administrative processes. I collaborated with staff members to eliminate the backlog of curriculum proposals that had built up after a year of neglect; assured that the college summer school course schedule follows standard dates and class times and that summer school is profitable; and reorganized the College Assessment and Review Committee process.

A historic problem within the college is that social and behavior sciences and humanities and creative arts departments are traditionally resource poor. However, many of these same departments teach a large share of the college's distance education courses. To help direct more dollars to these departments, I proposed to Interim Dean Brian Spooner that the college initiate a \$15 per credit hour fee for all distance education courses with \$10 per credit hour reverting to the originating department and the remaining \$5 per credit hour coming back to the college. After discussions with KSU's Division of Continuing Education, the college initiated a \$15 per credit hour fee. The revenue from this fee provided an important new source of income for a number of these departments in a period when their budgets were being cut.

In July 2011, I was appointed Interim Dean; filling in a gap of six months until Dean Peter Dorhout was able to arrive on campus. During this period, I gained a new appreciation for the depth and breadth of a college that accounts for 55% of the student credit hour production at Kansas State University. I worked extensively with department heads to gain approval for or to initiate approved faculty searches, represented the interests of the college at Deans Council meetings, interacted with the Dean's Alumni Advisory Council and College Committee on Planning, evaluated and processed tenure and promotion cases, worked with the K-State Foundation staff to solicit donations, promoted a diversity of people and ideas through hiring processes and college sponsored activities, and fulfilled a variety of other tasks, large and small, all of which assured that the college continued to progress in a positive direction.

In addition to these standard operating procedures, during my six months as Interim Dean, I worked with the incoming new dean, my colleagues in the dean's office, and department heads and faculty members to initiate three policy proposals. The first was the realignment of the Theatre and Dance programs out of Communications Studies into the Music program, creating the School of Music, Theatre, and Dance. Working closely with Professor Gary Mortenson, the Head of the Music Department, the realignment proposal passed with nearly the unanimous support of all the faculty members in the affected departments. The new school became a reality in the Fall of 2012. In addition to improved coordination among performing arts programs, the long-term goals are to elevate the standing of the performing arts at Kansas State and to provide a naming opportunity for a potential donor(s).

The second was a proposal to charge a consumables fee for courses that have additional lab, technology, and field trip expenditures. Historically, these expenses come out of each department's operating budget, a budget line that has received no appreciable increase in support over the past decade. Although last year, this proposal was not approved, the Provost did increase the college's budget for consumable items by \$800,000. This year, Dean Peter Dorhout and I have revised this proposal to be a general \$10 per credit hour fee applied to all the student credit hours taught within the college. In addition, we have broadened the scope of the proposal by including student scholarships for study abroad and undergraduate research opportunities. Given the feedback that we have received, we are cautiously optimistic that the Provost, President and the Kansas Board of Regents will approve this proposal.

The third was proposing with my colleague Associate Dean Beth Montelone, a grant program targeted at junior faculty members in their first three years on the tenure clock in departments that traditionally do not have large startup packages. The goal of this grant program is to encourage these faculty members to seek extramural funding for their research agendas by providing summer salary and graduate research assistant support. When Dean Dorhout arrived on campus, he funded this proposal with a portion of his hiring package. The College just finished awarding its second round of grants. Associate Dean Montelone, who designed and runs this program, will begin assessing the outcomes next fall.

My philosophy of academic leadership is to model the behavior I wish others to follow. In this respect, I maintain an active research agenda by continuing to publish in peer-reviewed outlets and by applying for and receiving extramural funding. As an administrator, I have always promoted excellence in teaching and scholarship through allocating resources to permit junior faculty members to develop viable research agendas and by encouraging senior faculty to expand their influence by working in interdisciplinary teams on curriculum issues and scholarship. This vision of professional development will continue to influence my priorities as Dean. I know that professional development is one of the keys for building a highly ranked college.

Another component of my philosophy is the recognition that fundraising is an increasingly important responsibility for a dean. Alumni, friends, and other prospective supporters of departments and the college expect a personal touch from the dean in return for their generous support. Thus, any dean needs to be prepared to work with foundation staff to travel and visit with their donors and to assist in the nurturing and cultivation of new donors.

Anchoring my philosophy of academic leadership is a strong belief in promoting a diversity of ideas and of people. In everything that we do as a community of scholars, we should be inclusive when making programmatic funding decisions and focus on diversity when recruiting students and hiring faculty and staff.

In conclusion, I believe that I have the education, administrative experience, background, breadth of experience, and research record that is necessary to be the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at Auburn University. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph A. Aistrup". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joseph" being the most prominent.

Joseph A. Aistrup, Ph.D.
Professor of Political Science
Associate Dean