

KARI BURRELL

January 18, 2021

Sabah Randhawa, PhD
President
Western Washington University
516 High Street
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear President Randhawa, VPBFA Search Advisory Committee, and Academic Search Team:

I would like to be considered for the Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs (VPBFA) position that you are recruiting to fill.

I currently reside in Alaska, but I lived in Washington for almost 20 years. I am very interested in returning to Washington and I have been keeping an eye out for a new university position that will allow me to grow professionally. I am excited to see the Western Washington University VPBFA position posted. I am drawn to WWU's emphasis on social justice, as that has been a key thread in my career. The VPBFA role is also very similar to the role I had at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I am considered a strong leader, I have the requisite skill set and relevant experiences, and I think I could bring energy and value to the position.

In 2019, I left a four-year position as the chief financial officer and Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). UAF is Alaska's flagship public university, serves 8000+ students annually, and during my tenure had an annual operating budget of \$425 million and an annual capital budget of \$10 million.

Alaska's public higher education system is a single system; all three universities report to a system president and to the same Board of Regents. Each of Alaska's universities has several campuses. UAF has seven campuses, and several additional research facility sites. I therefore have experience working with colleagues both within my home university across its campuses and sites, but also throughout the UA system. I enjoy this type of collaborative work; it sharpens my thinking.

At UAF, I was a member of the Chancellor's executive leadership team. I joined first as the Chancellor's Executive Officer, functioning as chief of staff. In this role I served the chancellor as strategic advisor and as manager of numerous high profile and sensitive ad hoc projects. A year later, I was appointed to the Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services role. As VCAS, I led the work of our financial services, facilities, human resources, fire and police, environmental health, risk management, and information technology units. Between my VCAS and Executive Officer roles, I led the university's five year campus master planning process, the standing safety and space planning committees, co-chaired the annual planning and budget committee with the Provost, served on the system president's summit team and the system-wide information technology and business councils, and led ad hoc UAF committees on gender inclusivity and enrollment.

Prior to joining UAF, I worked for twelve years for two different governors in the Washington State Governor's Office. Washington's state government is a large, complex entity managed with a matrixed leadership structure. My role was to assist in identifying strategic priorities and developing achievable paths to implementation. Success required working with partners in the agencies, legislature, and external stakeholder groups. As an example, one of my duties was to chair the Governor's Health Care Cabinet, and one of our tasks was to successfully implement a new IT system to support the state's new health benefit exchange; this was a high profile, politicized, and time and resource constrained project implemented with minor day one hiccups. In these roles, I was fortunate to work with a very wide range of people, from foster youth and individuals with disabilities advocating for services, to state employees passionate about the work of their agencies, to business and union leaders, to sometimes antagonistic members of the press, to other state and provincial government leaders.

I left my University of Alaska Fairbanks position in order to pursue a new challenge. It had initially been my intent to take a few months off and then to seek a similar, position at a public research university in the "Lower 48." However, my mom, who lives nearby, experienced some significant health issues during the summer of 2019 and I was simultaneously recruited by the local health system to create a new unit focused on deepening and expanding community partnerships, so I remained in Alaska. I have enjoyed the opportunity I have at Foundation Health Partners to wade into areas of unmet need, assess opportunities, and develop new programs and processes. Some of the bigger projects I am currently working on are: 1) collaborating with local governments, other health providers and social services providers to develop and implement a Community Health Improvement Plan, 2) collaborating with state universities and local health employers to launch a regional health workforce development planning process, and 3) developing a strategic approach for our external marketing.

Although I have done lots of public engagement work and I am good at it, I have a stronger orientation for analysis, strategy development and the organizational work required to advance an agenda. I really enjoyed my UAF VCAS position – it afforded me the opportunity to think about how best to serve the various missions of the university's program units with the resources available. I appreciated that it was both a strategic and an operational role. I had a strong team of administrative leaders reporting to me, but we didn't do our work solely on our own. We partnered with our customers in the program units, peers at the other universities in the system, and with the Faculty Senate, Staff Council and the Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (student government). One tool we used to ensure our processes remained relevant was regular program reviews of not just our academic areas, but of our administrative areas as well.

I have significant experience in developing and implementing budgets – both in good times and in bad. I was very engaged in the development of the state's budget when I was in Washington, including discussions regarding the state's higher education budgets (operating and capital, universities and student aid). The State of Alaska has experienced significant revenue reductions due to a decline in its oil revenues and this has triggered significant budget reductions to state agencies and to the University of Alaska. At UAF, we held regular budget forums and used shared governance planning committees to inform the university community regarding the scope of reduced revenues and to identify areas for possible downsizing or

elimination. I found that very few university employees, including leadership, really understood how revenues/costs flowed in the university and my team worked on developing dashboards, budget white papers, scenarios, etc. to assist leadership, unit managers, and our colleagues in the system office to better understand the budget and the implications of the trendlines of our key revenue sources.

The leaders I have worked for relied upon me to provide thoughtful and strategic analyses and recommendations, resolve thorny issues and otherwise exercise sound decision-making, craft appropriate communications for a wide variety of audiences, and perform excellent people management. I was a well-liked manager, both by my direct reports and by my peers in other parts of the institution. I have attached a list of references that includes individuals who have worked with me in different capacities: supervisors, colleagues, direct reports.

As I noted earlier, I left my University of Alaska Fairbanks position in order to pursue a new challenge. Although I greatly value the mission of Foundation Health Partners, my current employer, I do not feel fully utilized and I am keeping an eye out for a position that is more engaging. I am very interested in your VCBFA opportunity. From my days in the Governor's Office, I am aware of the role that WWU plays in Washington's higher education system, functioning as the strongest of the non-research universities. I am excited by WWU's effort to engage students in a responsible way in relevant community and state issues. I visited Bellingham often while my sister was a WWU graduate student and am fond of the area. The VPBFA position appears to be the kind of work I enjoy, in a place I want to live!

I am hopeful that a review of my resume will indicate to you that I have the interests and skills that you are looking for. Thank you for your consideration of my interest in your position.

Sincerely,

Kari Burrell

KARI BURRELL

SUMMARY OF SKILLS

Strategic, big picture thinker who integrates ideas and partners with others to achieve desired outcomes. Effective large organization leadership skills. Experienced decision-maker comfortable working in multi-disciplinary, fast-paced, and often uncertain environments. Analytical with a problem-solving orientation. Crisis management experience. Policy and strategy development experience including within higher education and state government settings. Budget development and management experience including identifying priority strategies and identifying opportunities for streamlining. Project management experience including developing initiatives, leading implementation, monitoring progress and reporting results. Well-developed facilitation and mediation skills. Skilled listener and communicator.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FOUNDATION HEALTH PARTNERS

Aug 2019 – present

Community Health Planning & Partnerships Director: Foundation Health Partners is a local health system serving Interior Alaska with the only community hospital, the largest multi-specialty clinic in the state, and the only nursing home facility. This is a new position created to develop partnerships at the local and state level to address local health care system gaps, reduce operating losses, and expand revenue opportunities. Responsible for developing the Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan, serving as the primary point of contact for external partners, public relations, and service line marketing. Fairbanks, AK

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

2013 – 2019

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is Alaska's flagship research university. With a \$425 million annual operating budget, a \$10-\$25M annual capital budget, 3500 employees, seven campuses and four major and several smaller research sites, it serves 8,000+ students with academic programs ranging from occupational endorsements to doctoral degrees, undertakes \$130 million in research activity, and serves as the state's land, sea, and space grant institution.

Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services (2014 to 2019): Served as a member of the university's executive leadership team and as the university's chief financial officer. Led the financial and administrative components of the university, including: the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Finance & Accounting, the Bursar's Office, the Office of Grants and Contracts, Facilities Services (design and construction, maintenance, groundskeeping, utilities), Human Resources, the Office of Information Technology, Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management, Procurement, and the Police and Fire (includes emergency management) Departments. Responsible for developing and managing the university's annual operating budget and for managing the capital construction budget. Served as a member of the University of Alaska system's Summit Team, coordinating and collaborating with partners at the system's administrative offices and at the system's two other universities.

Executive Officer (2013 to 2017): Functioned as the chancellor's chief of staff and served in the chancellor's capacity when the chancellor was absent from campus. Assisted the chancellor with analysis, strategic direction, project leadership, and initiative development. Served as a liaison with external partners and public officials as needed, including negotiating agreements and contracts.

GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE POLICY OFFICE, STATE OF WASHINGTON 2001 - 2013
Policy Director (2010 to January 2013): Served as Governor Chris Gregoire's chief policy advisor and as a member of her seven-person senior staff team. Managed the governor's Executive Policy Office and the governor's Accountability and Performance Office. Anticipated and managed issues of statewide significance. Assisted the governor in identifying strategic priorities, developing initiatives to advance these priorities, and overseeing and evaluating implementation of these initiatives. Coordinated closely with the governor's agency, budget, legislative, and communications directors to achieve alignment. Represented the governor at public speaking engagements, fielding media questions, in meetings with interest groups and legislators, and on several statewide boards.

Executive Policy Advisor (2001 to 2009): Served Governors Gary Locke and Chris Gregoire as their human services, behavioral health, housing, and financial institutions issues policy advisor. Served as the main point of contact in the governor's office for agency staff, legislators, media and interest groups on these issues. Provided substantive and strategic advice to the governor both in-person and via written analytical briefs. Worked with agencies to develop and evaluate initiatives furthering the administration's policy agenda. Collaborated with budget staff to develop the state's operating and capital budgets, assessing effectiveness of currently funded state activities, weighing agency and interest group input, and identifying priorities for enhancements and reductions. Collaborated with agencies and the Governor's Management Accountability and Performance team to develop effective measures to assess state performance. Developed, lobbied, and crafted compromises as needed to support the governor's legislative agenda. Analyzed legislation to assist the governor in determining whether to support, or if necessary, veto. Represented the governor in legislative hearings, at public speaking engagements, in meetings with interest groups, and on several boards and task forces. Olympia, WA

KING COUNTY DISTRICT COURT, MENTAL HEALTH COURT 1999 – 2001
Program Manager: Administered an innovative and nationally recognized criminal justice/mental health treatment systems integration project. Managed relations among program partners (including defense, prosecution, jail, and mental health treatment staff); managed grant implementation and reporting activities; represented the program as needed to the county executive, the council and to the public; coordinated day-to-day operations of the mental health court; supervised the program's two mental health specialist probation officers. Seattle, WA

DELOITTE & TOUCHE CONSULTING GROUP 1995 - 1998
Manager: Member of firm's national public sector consulting practice, specializing in strategic planning, organization redesign and change management services. As a project leader, prepared project work plans, supervised both client and firm staff, directed analysis, tracked deliverables to completion, and presented concluding reports. Project experiences included: coordinating change management activities for Clark County, Nevada's Department of Family and Youth Services as it reorganized its juvenile justice and child welfare programs; business process redesign and change management for Wisconsin's W-2 welfare reform initiative; management improvement review for Washington State's Children's Administration; business process analysis for New Zealand's Children, Young Persons and their Families agency; and change management and field support for the Oklahoma Division of Child and Family Service's Oklahoma KIDS system roll-out. Seattle WA/Sacramento CA

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, MALCOLM WIENER CENTER FOR SOCIAL POLICY 1995
Research Associate: As part of a three-year project entitled "Executive Session on New Paradigms for Child Protective Services," researched and completed a case study of the State of Missouri's innovations in providing child protective and child welfare services. Project funded by the Annie E. Casey and Edna McConnell Clark Foundations. Cambridge, MA

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, CHILDREN'S BUREAU 1994-1995
Consultant: Coauthored a study "A National Review of the Management of the Federally Funded Independent Living Program" which assessed states' management of a \$70 million federal child welfare program. Consulting project served as Master's degree "thesis." The study was published by Harvard University's Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy. Cambridge, MA

EDUCATION

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

Earned Master in Public Policy degree. Core coursework included quantitative policy analysis and public management classes. Received prestigious school "excellence" award and the Manuel C. Carballo Memorial Prize for an innovative social policy paper for co-authored thesis project. Cambridge, MA

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Earned Bachelor of Arts degree cum laude. Major concentrations: political science and history; minor concentration: English literature. Golden Key Honor Society. Eugene, OR

Kari Burrell's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Over the course of my personal life and my career, I have been exposed to a range of different types of people, have thought about how those differences can be both alienating and enriching, and, as an organizational leader, have thought about what my responsibilities are to address.

I am the child of immigrant parents. I am white and my parents are English. On the surface, I pass for majority culture. But I still had the experience of neighbors and teachers, knowing my parents were foreign, trying to acculturate me and my siblings. I am conscious of an American sense of cultural superiority that can be exclusionary. For many years I thought of myself as bicultural. However, as a teenager, my family spent a sabbatical year in Scotland. I was treated civilly, but was clearly an outsider. I also realized in that year that I really am very American in how I think.

I grew up in Alaska, far from "mainstream America," with a substantial Alaskan Native community, a hardscrabble mining community, and an international university community. Differing values were more than evident. When I was a child, Alaska experienced an extraordinary economic boom and subsequent bust. Families arrived from all over America, and often disappeared again within months. Because of the transitory nature of the community, a premium placed on getting along with a wide variety of people.

Partly because of the experiences described above, I have always been interested in how people interact and treat each other. I was (and am still) interested in social justice. I ended up moving career wise into social services and social policy. I began in child welfare services, working on behalf of at-risk children and their families. I moved later into mental health services. From there my work expanded to work with individuals with all types of disabilities and individuals experiencing homelessness. I am passionate about addressing poverty and the pernicious social inequities it drives.

I worked for many years in the Washington State Governor's Office. My role was, in part, to advocate for people of different backgrounds. Even so, I still found it eye opening to participate in the annual Centennial Accord meeting with Washington's tribal leaders and in the annual joint leadership meetings with the leadership of the British Columbia provincial government.

In 2013 I left politics and accepted a university job. I was interested in serving in a public institution that provides opportunities for students from all backgrounds and works on addressing public interest issues. I had several experiences at UAF related to addressing equity, diversity and inclusion.

As the Chancellor's Executive Officer, I was heavily involved in efforts to improve how our university responded to Title IX gender discrimination complaints. Even though I am a lifelong feminist, I struggled some with the then federal expectation that the university would mitigate adverse gender experiences women had had, whether on or off campus. In part I felt it was not fair; we weren't expected to mitigate adverse experiences military veterans had had, or that poor students had had. It was also frustrating that our university, which was struggling financially, would have to use our resources to address a much larger social problem. I still think both of these concerns are valid. But I did come to believe that, as the role of a university is to grow knowledge, universities have a unique responsibility for tackling social issues and exporting what we learn to the broader community. I believe it is important for universities to tackle diversity, equity and inclusion, not only to make the university a better environment for our students and employees, but also to test approaches/strategies that might have value for the larger communities we serve.

My involvement in addressing gender inclusion at UAF initially came about as a result of our university's receipt of a "Dear Colleague" letter sent by the Obama administration indicating it considered accommodations for transgender students a Title IX issue. We set up a committee to review our policies and practices for transgender students and employees. My initial mindset was that as a public university we of course do not discriminate against people based on gender identity. The members of the committee quickly convinced me that the issue is not simply one of discrimination, but of inclusion. The committee was renamed from the "Transgender Committee" to the "Gender Inclusion" committee. We worked on addressing institutional barriers such as IT system limitations for students who wish to change their names and creating non-gender specific restroom and shower facilities. We also spent significant time on campus education regarding gender identity issues. My role as a senior leader evolved from ensuring compliance to opening doors to facilitate conversations and education.

One of the more interesting projects I worked on was recruitment and retention of military affiliated and veteran students. Current and former military personnel and their dependents have long been served as students at UAF and hired as employees as they comprise a significant portion of Alaska's population. There was a sense, however, that UAF wasn't military friendly. Our efforts to tackle this concern was less about campus education and more about creating a "home" for students (a new Office of Military and Veteran Affairs with a student hang-out space), a planning committee of employees and faculty that we threw open to all who were interested, and celebratory events like an annual Chancellor's reception for military students, employees, faculty. These activities made our institutional support much more visible.

UAF undertook an employee morale survey. In general, the finding was that morale was not great. A closer look at the data indicated that employees liked their jobs and their supervisors and immediate work teams, but felt disconnected from the rest of the university and from the leadership team. The survey was taken at a time of significant budget reduction and there was concern that the leadership team didn't understand or value the work of individual units. This survey was eye-opening to me as part of the leadership team. Even though UAF is a large organization, with employees physically located across the state, and many pressing work demands, employees still need to feel a significant connection to the leadership team. There was some discussion as to what human resources could do to address the issue. Ultimately, we took the results to mean that leadership needs to be accessible and transparent. Addressing the issue became more of a leadership communication issue than a human resources issue.

For the most part, I believe universities appreciate the need for diversity and equity. There is room for more education on both subjects (e.g. the UAF faculty and deans were actually very happy to receive training on gender inclusion). The larger issue facing us now is how to achieve inclusion and a sense of belonging. I feel there are fewer resources available on this topic. I also think the value universities place on tradition conflicts somewhat with the value universities place on cultivating diversity, equity and inclusion. Creating an inclusive environment means there should be less emphasis on "this is how we've always done things, and you need to learn our system." There is a lag in diversity among tenured faculty, administrators, and executive leadership because these positions are filled with people hired years ago who have grown up in the system. At senior leadership levels, there is less need for technical expertise and more need for individuals who can inspire others to give their best. Diversity, equity and inclusion is fundamental to the role of university leadership, but an area in which I feel I will be a lifelong student.