Dear Members of the McNeese State University Presidential Search Committee,
I am writing to express my interest in the position of President at McNeese State University. With its rich
history spanning 85 years, McNeese State has been a source of opportunity for students across southwest
Louisiana, profoundly changing lives and fostering economic development within its community.
Having dedicated my career to advancing higher education’s mission to power the social mobility of our
students and the economic and cultural vitality of the public we serve, I have served in significant leadership
roles including the Dean of the College of Engineering and Natural Sciences at the University of Tennessee at
Martin, and currently as the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Arkansas
Fort Smith. These experiences follow a 15-year faculty career as a professor of physics at the University of
Southern Indiana and Millsaps College.
The appointment of the ¿ᄉ輐Ė恄蘖�ᦌneed
 for strategic enrollment initiatives.
Despite these challenges, McNeese State possesses remarkable opportunities for growth. The unwavering
support from the community and alums, as evidenced by the strength of the university's endowment,
underscores the confidence in its mission to empower students and change lives. Moreover, the faculty and
staff's commitment to student success, exemplified by initiatives such as the EAB Moonshot for Equity, lays
a solid foundation for enrollment growth and strong student outcomes. The university's dedication to
regional economic development, exemplified by programs like the SEED Center and the cultural
contributions through initiatives like Banners at McNeese, further distinguish it as a vital asset to the
community.
As McNeese State endeavors to achieve its enrollment targets outlined in the 2023-2028 strategic plan, I am
committed to leveraging existing strengths while exploring innovative avenues to expand academic offerings,
foster partnerships with community colleges, and facilitate pathways for diverse student populations,
including dual and concurrent enrollees and those adults seeking to complete their degree.
In addressing this imperative, I bring a track record of proven success in spearheading strategic enrollment
planning initiatives, as evidenced by my tenure at UT Martin. There, I led the formulation of the strategic
enrollment plan and executed its implementation, resulting in a notable 7% increase in the incoming first-year
class since the plan’s launch. Moreover, my leadership at UT Martin and UA Fort Smith has been
instrumental in developing innovative academic programs tailored to meet student interests and community
needs, fostering enrollment growth and contributing to regional economic prosperity.
At UA Fort Smith, my responsibilities extend to overseeing comprehensive student success initiatives,
culminating in achieving a 20-year high in our first time first year Fall 22 to Fall 23 retention rates. Our
success in bolstering retention rates, particularly among at-risk student cohorts through initiatives like our
Lion Scholars program, underscores our commitment to supporting diverse student populations and UAFS is
now an emerging HSI. Additionally, my stewardship in fostering strategic partnerships with local community
colleges have yielded tangible results, including establishing 2+2 agreements.
Considering McNeese State’s desire to chart a trajectory of future growth, it is paramount that the next
president demonstrates adeptness in resource management and development. This work entails fostering
growth in net tuition revenue, securing state support, and spearheading impactful fundraising efforts to

sustain the institution's mission. As the educational landscape evolves and student de

In my commitment to serving my institutions and cultivating these relationships, I've actively engaged with
the community, demonstrating support for my hometown and my institution. Since joining UA Fort Smith,
I've participated in over two dozen chamber of commerce events, fostering connections with business and
community leaders while networking with state and federal elected officials. Additionally, I've presented to
various civic organizations, emphasizing the university's role in shaping the region's future. I've represented
the university and our community to national defense leaders from Finland as they consider locating fighter
pilot training in the region. I've also had the honor of delivering the inaugural "CED Talk" at the UAFS
Center for Economic Development, highlighting the interconnectedness between regional economic vitality
and the university's future to a broad audience of community members.
Furthermore, being accessible and visible on campus is crucial for the next president of McNeese State.
Faculty and staff need regular interaction and dialogue with campus leadership to feel engaged and informed
about the institution's direction. Similarly, engaging with students across campus is essential for fostering a
sense of community and culture, ultimately impacting enrollment positively.
In my leadership role at UAFS, I've prioritized increasing the visibility and engagement of the provost office
on the campus. I've held meetings with all academic departments to enhance communication and
collaboration, implemented monthly meetings with department-level academic leadership to solicit feedback
and inform decision-making, and engaged with incoming honors students to address mental health concerns.
Drawing from my experience in recruitment events, I've actively participated in events to showcase academic
programs and engage with prospective students. Additionally, I've fostered shared governance processes by
ensuring faculty and staff representation in leadership search committees and hold regular meetings with
faculty senate leaders to address concerns of and discuss potential impacts on faculty as we work as partners
to advance the University.
Lastly, I recognize the importance of mentoring the next generation of leaders, a role that has been pivotal in
my professional journey. I've been fortunate to have mentors guide me, and I'm committed to paying it
forward by supporting faculty and staff in their professional development.
I am poised to harness my expertise in resource management, enrollment strategy, and advocacy to propel
McNeese State University toward a future defined by sustained growth and excellence. My unwavering
commitment to nurturing student success and advancing the institution's mission aligns with the challenges
and opportunities that lie ahead. With a wealth of leadership experience in integrating the region’s economic
future into the university's strategic vision, a proven track record of engaging with the community and
industry stakeholders, and a genuine dedication to regional public institutions, I am confident in my ability to
foster innovation, elevate student achievement, and guide McNeese State towards sustainable growth and
influence in Southwest Louisiana and beyond.
Thank you for considering my application. I eagerly anticipate the opportunity to explore further how my
qualifications align with the unique needs and aspirations of McNeese State University.

Shadow Robinson
Provost & Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs
University of Arkansas-Fort Smith

Shadow J.Q. Robinson
Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs
University of Arkansas at Fort Smith
LEADERSHIP ROLES: RESPONSIBILITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS – Fort Smith
Provost & Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs (2022-present)
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