



February 8, 2025

Dear Mr. Mark Romero and the Search Committee:

I write you today with enthusiasm to apply for the role of President of University of Louisiana at Lafayette. As both a native Louisianian and a living testimony of what a college education affords, I have spent the last 20 years in higher education learning, listening, and leading organizations. I believe that I have the ambition, flexibility, servant leadership style, and working knowledge of the educational, social, and political landscape to be successful in this position following President Savoie's accomplishments. In this period of accelerated change, ULL can continue to advance through expending its energy towards renewal and reinvention in support of the 2023-2028 strategic plan and associated fundraising campaigns.

As the Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences at South Dakota State University, I have approached my roles and responsibilities with enthusiasm, opportunism, analysis, and initiative. With the support of my interdisciplinary leadership team, we have (1) built a collaborative and connected culture between faculty across 45 programs of study ranging from aviation to fashion studies and exercise science to education as examples; (2) re-energized fundraising and philanthropic activities surpassing the *Bold and Blue* campaign's goal of 400 million dollars raised/pledged; (3) led accreditation efforts across 12 different agencies; (4) elevated research expenditures by 27% in the last two years; and (5) developed enrollment pipelines with technical colleges and internally from undergraduate to graduate programs resulting in increases of 11% and 23% respectively. These successes were predicated by leveraging the land-grant mission and network of support across the state through a keen focus on education, innovation, and service for which I am also prepared to embrace at ULL.

Sustainability is the gold standard in higher education and it is for that reason that my focus has been on designing and leading replicable efforts that have led to increases in student enrollment every year while serving as Dean for the last six years, supported transformative faculty initiatives with Cooperative Extension and the Ag Experiment Station, successfully chaired accreditation visits, cherished the working relationships I have cultivated with the Board of Regents and other state/federal leadership teams, secured multimillion-dollar grants and philanthropic gifts, forged preeminent partnerships with groundbreaking institutions like St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and aligned academic programs for the interdisciplinary needs of today and tomorrow. These experiences were only accomplished in collaboration with and through elevating the capacity of staff and faculty (empowering the human potential on campus), and through the creation of stakeholder collectives that can garner political support, provide financial resources, and champion our initiatives.

As President of the Ortlieb Foundation, a local Louisiana-based non-profit organization whose mission is to provide college scholarships for cancer survivors, I remain actively engaged in community building throughout Louisiana and believe that servant leadership is at the root of what it means to be a Ragin' Cajun. I am prepared to strengthen its Acadiana legacy, enhance its national prominence as a leading

research-intensive university, and ensure opportunity for all, positioning ULL as a global leader in innovation and community impact.

Having the privilege to learn from the entire University of Louisiana System is something I would value while working with students, staff, faculty, and other stakeholders to uphold its strategic plan, acquire and manage resources effectively, and engage in ongoing philanthropic activities to enhance and expand operations. Partnerships are the birthplace of possibility, and I am committed to pursuing these in political, corporate, educational, and social circles. It would be an honor and privilege to serve as the 7th President of University of Louisiana at Lafayette and contribute my energy, experience, and vision towards excellence in education, innovation, and capacity building. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to discussing my candidacy with you. Boldly, Happily, Faithfully!

Sincerely,



Evan Ortlieb
Dean, College of Education and Human Sciences
South Dakota State University

Evan Ortlieb, Ph.D.

Senior Higher Education Executive | President Candidate

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Senior higher education executive with more than 20 years of progressively responsible leadership experience across public, private, and international universities. Demonstrated success leading complex academic enterprises, advancing enrollment growth amid demographic and fiscal pressures, expanding philanthropic and sponsored funding, and strengthening institutional reputation through accreditation excellence and community-engaged innovation. Recognized for collaborative, transparent leadership; disciplined fiscal stewardship; and a student-centered approach grounded in access, workforce alignment, and regional economic vitality.

PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

- University-wide executive leadership and shared governance
- Strategic enrollment management and student success
- Fundraising, advancement, and donor stewardship (\$40M+ raised)
- Fiscal oversight and resource alignment (\$27M+ annual portfolios)
- State, federal, and system-level relations
- Accreditation leadership (SACSCOC, CAEP, CACREP)
- Faculty and staff recruitment, development, and retention
- Workforce development and regional economic partnerships
- Research growth and innovation ecosystems
- Crisis leadership, organizational change, and consensus building

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Dean, College of Education and Human Sciences

South Dakota State University | 2023–Present

Serve as senior executive leader for a comprehensive academic enterprise comprising 44 undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs; more than 3,000 students; over 140 faculty and staff; and a \$27M annual operating and research budget. Report directly to the Provost and serve as a key advisor on university-wide strategy, enrollment, budgeting, and external relations.

- Stabilized and grew enrollment by 16% over two years through market-responsive program development, enhanced recruitment pipelines, and graduate tuition-offset strategies
- Led college advancement efforts resulting in more than \$31M in philanthropic, state, and federal funding, including endowed faculty positions and capital investments
- Partnered with the Provost and Vice President for Research to advance a college-wide research strategy, contributing to a 23% increase in annual research expenditures
- Provided leadership to the university laboratory school (Fishback Center for Early Childhood Education) as well as the Child and Family Resource Network to ensure strong early childhood educational opportunities across South Dakota
- Fundraised and started the Lucas P. Wintrode Autism Support Services to provide wrap-around supports for students on campus with ASD; won A.B.L.E. award in Brookings, SD
- Created a nutrition-based partnership with the Athletics Office to hire a registered dietitian who serves as a site supervisor for our masters and doctoral level nutrition and dietetics interns to support sport performance and injury prevention of 600+ student athletes
- Served as chief external liaison to state agencies and federal partners, including Departments of Education and Health and Human Services and the Federal Aviation Administration
- Provided executive oversight of SDSU's aviation program, including 18 aircraft, FAA compliance, and more than 260 pilots in training within the College of EHS
- Launched cross-sector initiatives addressing rural workforce development, nutrition security, and community health

- Strengthened faculty recruitment and retention through strategic hires, mentoring structures, and aligned workload and incentive models

Dean & Endowed Chair, Zucker Family School of Education

The Citadel | 2020-2023

Served as chief academic and administrative officer for the Zucker Family School of Education, providing leadership for undergraduate and graduate programs, faculty affairs, accreditation, fundraising, and community engagement within a military college context.

- Led the School through the COVID-19 pandemic while achieving 38% enrollment growth during a period of national decline
- Secured perfect accreditation outcomes, including CAEP review with zero findings and an eight-year CACREP renewal
- Raised more than \$5M in private philanthropy and oversaw approximately \$4M annually in competitive grant funding
- Established fully funded Summer Bridge and access programs for first-generation and high-need students
- Expanded graduate pipelines across 28 counties in South Carolina through partnerships with school districts, the National Guard, and nonprofit organizations
- Contributed to institution-wide SACSCOC reaffirmation as a member of executive leadership and accreditation teams
- Strengthened faculty development, tenure support, and mentoring systems to improve retention and promotion outcomes

Director, Manhattan Campus & Director of Doctoral Programs

St. John's University | 2015-2020

Provided senior administrative leadership as a Full Professor for graduate and doctoral programs across face-to-face, hybrid, and online modalities in New York City and online environments.

- Led campus-based and online graduate programs serving diverse, urban, and working professionals
- Oversaw doctoral admissions, dissertation processes, faculty supervision, and assessment systems
- Participated in university-wide strategic planning initiatives focused on enrollment, fundraising, and alumni engagement
- Supported CAEP accreditation and institutional assessment efforts

- Advanced equity-focused mentoring and faculty development structures

Additional Academic and Administrative Leadership (Selected)

Monash University- Australia (Senior Lecturer & Course Leader); Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi (Assistant Professor & Coordinator of Graduate Programs); Valdosta State University (Assistant Professor & Director of Reading Clinics)

EDUCATION

- Ph.D., Curriculum & Instruction (Reading Education) – Louisiana State University
- M.Ed., Elementary Education – Louisiana State University
- B.S., Elementary Education – Louisiana State University (University Medalist)

EXECUTIVE & LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

- Harvard Graduate School of Education – Institute for Management and Leadership in Education
- Harvard Graduate School of Education – Aligning Strategic Priorities with Financial Resources
- MIT Sloan Executive Education – Transforming Your Leadership Strategy
- Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania – Business Analytics: From Data to Insights

CAREER IMPACT SNAPSHOT

- 20+ years of higher education leadership across public, private, and intl. organizations
- \$40M+ raised through philanthropic, state, and federal partnerships
- Sustained enrollment growth during periods of demographic and pandemic-driven decline
- Multiple successful accreditation cycles with zero AFIs
- Extensive experience in state, federal, and system-level collaboration to promote access, funding support, and innovative programming for career advancement

SCHOLARSHIP, GRANTS, & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (SUMMARY)

Author or editor of more than 140 peer-reviewed articles, books, and book chapters. Principal or co-principal investigator on multi-million-dollar competitive grants from state, federal, and foundation sources. Frequent national and international speaker on higher education leadership, literacy, differentiation within higher education, and innovation. Complete scholarly and grant record available upon request.