

Daniel Reardon
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Dear Drs. Grubbs, Swenson, Enke, and Peterson,

I am writing to express my strong interest in the position of Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education at Missouri S&T. My extensive experience in academic leadership, student success initiatives, faculty development, and curriculum innovation aligns closely with the priorities of this role. After discussions with Dean Mehrzad Boroujerdi, I am particularly excited about the opportunity to collaborate with him and Associate Dean for Research and External Relations Yue-Wern Wang to advance the college's strategic goals. My approach emphasizes faculty engagement, strengthening interdisciplinary initiatives, and ensuring the long-term growth of academic programs.

Leadership in Academic Affairs and Student Success

My tenure as Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education and Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor of Academic Achievement and Enrichment has provided me with broad institutional leadership experience. I have successfully led initiatives that have reshaped the student experience and positioned Missouri S&T as a leader in student success. Through a combination of centralized academic advising, expanded tutoring services, and the development of a robust peer mentoring network, we achieved the longest consecutive years of retention growth at S&T since IPEDS reporting began in 2004. These efforts ensured that students had access to timely academic support, meaningful mentorship, and clear pathways to success, helping them navigate the challenges of their first-year experience more effectively. I collaborated with faculty and administrative leaders to implement McGraw-Hill's ALEKS for math placement, ensuring students were placed in courses where they could thrive. Additionally, I facilitated the transition to Stellic, a comprehensive degree audit and curriculum planning tool designed to simplify academic planning for students while providing faculty and advisors with real-time insights into student progress. This platform has improved transparency in degree pathways and enhanced advising efficiency, ensuring students stay on track toward timely graduation.

Collaboration has been a hallmark of my leadership. I partnered with Knack Tutoring, making Missouri S&T the #2 provider of one-on-one, on-demand Knack tutoring in the nation. I also led the establishment of a partnership with Mentor Collective, launching a peer mentoring program that now serves every S&T student, both undergraduate and graduate. These initiatives reflect my deep commitment to working across divisions and leveraging external partnerships to improve student outcomes.

Beyond these efforts, I also worked with library leadership to move the Writing Center to its new home in the library, transforming it into the Writing and Communication Center (WCC). This shift expanded its mission, allowing it to serve not just undergraduate students but also faculty and graduate students, enhancing interdisciplinary communication efforts across campus. Under the library's leadership, the WCC is now poised to lead innovations in AI-driven writing instruction. The WCC plays a vital role in supporting communication across disciplines, aligning with CASE's mission to provide students and faculty with essential skills for success in an increasingly interdisciplinary academic and professional

landscape. By partnering with Dean Boroujerdi and library leadership, I will seek new opportunities to strengthen the WCC's role within CASE and ensure its resources are maximized for student and faculty success.

Departmental Priorities and Strategic Growth

English and Technical Communication (ETC), my home department, plays a vital role within CASE, bridging the humanities and STEM disciplines through its innovative approach to communication, rhetoric, and media studies. In addition to its strengths in technical and professional writing, ETC is home to dynamic programs in literature, creative writing, and linguistics, which provide students with essential critical thinking and analytical skills. These areas enrich the department's interdisciplinary reach and support S&T's broader mission of developing graduates with effective communication and problem-solving abilities. The department has long been recognized for its leadership in technical and professional writing, preparing students to excel in industries where clear, effective communication is critical. With a commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, faculty within ETC have actively contributed to Missouri S&T's reputation for excellence in research, digital humanities, and technical communication education. However, recruitment remains a pressing challenge for the department, both at the undergraduate level and in the MS in Technical Communication program. Addressing this issue through targeted outreach, industry partnerships, and curriculum innovation will be key to strengthening ETC's enrollment and long-term sustainability.

Each department within CASE has unique strengths and challenges, requiring a tailored approach to support growth and student success. As Associate Dean, I will collaborate with Dean Boroujerdi, department chairs, and faculty to advance their strategic goals. The Education program is one of the strongest in Missouri, and its continued growth will depend on strategic recruitment, particularly for secondary education majors. In Psychological Science, a booming department with a national reputation, I will support faculty in ensuring the new Ph.D. program is fully integrated into the college's long-term vision.

Foundational STEM courses continue to be a major focus, and the success of our students in these courses requires collaboration between departments. In Physics, faculty have been working on innovative approaches to instruction, and I look forward to supporting their efforts while exploring additional ways to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. In Chemistry, foundational coursework presents an opportunity to assess and refine instructional approaches that meet students where they are while maintaining the rigor necessary for long-term success. Working with faculty, we can ensure students have a clear pathway to success through improved course structures and enhanced support services.

The History and Political Science department has recently proposed a new Pre-Law Certificate, a promising step toward interdisciplinary engagement. However, broader innovation remains a challenge, and the department must be supported in modernizing its offerings to attract more students. In Biology, the introduction of Bio-X is both an exciting development and a significant strain on faculty resources. I will work with Dr. Wang and the department to ensure that research support and faculty resources are aligned with the growing demands of this initiative.

The interdisciplinary potential within CASE is one of its greatest strengths. By fostering increased collaboration among departments, we can develop cross-disciplinary programs that align with emerging workforce needs. Strengthening partnerships between Arts, Languages, and Philosophy and STEM disciplines can provide students with valuable ethical, cultural, and communication competencies that

complement technical expertise. Additionally, the ROTC programs at S&T continue to be strong, and with enhanced outreach efforts, we can ensure their continued ability to develop leadership skills in students pursuing military and civilian careers alike.

Faculty Development, Mentorship, and Collaboration

Faculty development is central to CASE's success, and I will collaborate with Dean Boroujerdi and Dr. Wang to support faculty at all stages of their careers. In addition to leading strategic faculty recruitment efforts that attract top-tier candidates, I will prioritize mentorship programs that provide sustained support for faculty beyond their first year. Partnering with Dr. Kate Drowne in Faculty Affairs, I will help establish structured mentorship and leadership training for new and mid-career faculty, ensuring they have the resources to grow as educators and scholars.

Beyond recruitment, faculty retention must be a priority. Creating an environment where faculty feel valued and supported is essential to maintaining CASE's reputation for excellence in teaching and research. This means investing in professional development programs that provide ongoing opportunities for growth, encouraging interdisciplinary research collaborations, and ensuring that faculty are recognized for their contributions in meaningful ways.

Building Industry and Alumni Partnerships for CASE

Strengthening industry and alumni partnerships will be key to expanding experiential learning opportunities for students while also supporting faculty research and professional development. CASE has the potential to build stronger connections with industry leaders, ensuring that our students are equipped with practical skills and direct pathways to employment. By working collaboratively with Missouri S&T's corporate partners, we can develop new internship, co-op, and research opportunities that provide hands-on experience for students in every department. Existing partnerships with companies such as Boeing, Emerson, and Burns & McDonnell have already demonstrated the value of these collaborations, providing students with industry-relevant training while strengthening CASE's connections to major employers. Expanding these partnerships, particularly in fields such as technical communication, environmental policy, and applied psychology, will further enhance student opportunities and faculty engagement with industry-driven research initiatives.

Alumni engagement is another critical factor in CASE's future success. Our graduates are working in diverse fields across industries, and many are eager to give back through mentorship, guest lectures, and career placement support. By creating structured alumni engagement initiatives, we can leverage their expertise to provide networking opportunities for current students and deepen CASE's connections to the professional world. Through coordinated outreach efforts, we can strengthen CASE's reputation as a college that not only prepares students for success but also maintains a strong, lifelong support system for its graduates.

Strengthening First-Year Experience and Student Success Initiatives

Ensuring a strong first-year experience is not just about academic preparation but also about fostering a sense of belonging and confidence in students as they transition to university life. Missouri S&T's students are high-achievers, and many encounter their first academic challenges upon arrival. By providing early and structured interventions, we can support students in developing resilience and persistence in their studies. Expanding faculty mentoring for first-year students, strengthening co-curricular programs, and ensuring alignment between advising, tutoring, and foundational course instruction are all critical elements of a comprehensive first-year support system.

My previous leadership positions have allowed me to work closely with the Division of Student Success, and I am eager to re-establish those partnerships in this role. I will work to enhance academic advising, implement proactive intervention strategies, and ensure that foundational courses in math, physics, and chemistry align with student success initiatives. Additionally, recognizing that different student populations face unique challenges, we must tailor support systems to meet the needs of first-generation students, transfer students, and those entering CASE from non-traditional academic pathways.

Expanding cohort-based learning communities and offering structured pathways for at-risk students will further strengthen retention efforts. My leadership in implementing Knack Tutoring, Mentor Collective, and Stellic has already transformed how students access support, and I plan to continue building upon these successes. Additionally, I will work to further integrate the First Year Research Experience (FYRE) program, which Dr. Wang has been instrumental in leading. FYRE provides undergraduate students with early exposure to research opportunities, fostering curiosity and critical thinking from their first year. Strengthening the connection between first-year students and faculty research mentors through FYRE and similar initiatives will help CASE retain more students by engaging them in active learning and discovery.

Commitment to CASE's Strategic Vision

The CASE Strategic Plan emphasizes academic excellence, interdisciplinary collaboration, and student success. Throughout my career, I have championed initiatives that align with these priorities—leading transformative curriculum changes, developing cross-disciplinary programs, and implementing student-centered success strategies that have measurably improved retention and engagement. My experience in fostering faculty development, strengthening industry partnerships, and integrating technology into academic advising positions me well to support CASE in realizing its strategic vision. As Associate Dean, I will work closely with Dean Boroujerdi, Dr. Wang, the Dean's Leadership Council, and the CASE Faculty Leadership Council to align academic programs with the college's long-term goals. By fostering cross-departmental initiatives and external partnerships, I aim to elevate CASE's reputation within Missouri S&T and beyond.

Missouri S&T is at a pivotal moment, facing both challenges and opportunities as it seeks to modernize foundational courses, expand interdisciplinary research, and enhance student retention. With increasing emphasis on industry partnerships, student success initiatives, and faculty development, the university is well-positioned to implement transformative changes that will strengthen its academic programs. Through bold leadership and strategic collaboration, CASE can play a vital role in advancing these efforts and ensuring Missouri S&T remains a leader in STEM-focused education enriched by the humanities and social sciences. I look forward to bringing my experience and vision to this role and working closely with CASE leadership to support faculty, students, and interdisciplinary initiatives. Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome the opportunity to discuss my qualifications further.

Sincerely,

Daniel C. Reardon

Daniel C. Reardon (Dan)