



February 22, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I respectfully submit my application for the position of dean of the Clinton School of Public Service. I am currently professor of modern American policy history in the history department of The Ohio State University, where I am also a faculty fellow at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies. I also serve as the director of OSU's East Asian Studies Center, as well as associate editor of the *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*. I believe that my administrative experience at Ohio State and my scholarly focus on contemporary politics and policy make me an ideal candidate for your position.

My academic work has always focused on contemporary American policy and public affairs, with a particular focus on US-East Asian relations and on American politics since the 1960s. My first book, *The Pueblo Incident: A Spy Ship and the Failure of American Foreign Policy*, was a study of modern US-Korean relations; it won the John Arnold Book Prize and was nominated for the Pulitzer and Bancroft Prizes. I have also published three edited collections focused on modern American politics and international relations, along with approximately 20 articles in edited volumes and prominent journals such as *Diplomatic History*, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, *The Journal of Military History*, and *The Journal of Cold War Studies*, amongst others. I am currently at work on two manuscripts, both of which work at the intersection of modern American history and public policy. The first is an all-encompassing policy history of the Johnson administration, tentatively entitled *The Last Populist: The Presidency and Times of Lyndon Johnson*. This book, which will utilize the recently declassified White House phone recording and the records from foreign archives more than any book on the topic, puts Johnson's fundamental beliefs about capitalism and the role of the state at the core of the argument. The research on that book is largely completed, and I have written 7 of a projected 13 chapters. I recently put this work on hold, however, after an article I published in the *Journal of Military History* that looked at the relationship between African American soldiers in the Korean War and the modern civil rights movement attracted a great deal of attention, including offers from a number of publishers to expand it into a book about 20th century American wars and the civil rights movement. I am currently at work on that topic, with five chapters written (of a projected 12), in the hopes of delivering it to Cambridge University Press in the next few years.

My academic record, however, goes beyond books and articles. For almost ten years, I served as the editor of *Passport: the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Review*, and am preparing to become editor of the prestigious *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* in the next few years (a journal that I would plan to bring with me to Arkansas). I have been a fellow at the Miller Center for Public Affairs at the University of Virginia; the youngest holder of the Mary Ball Washington Distinguished Fulbright Chair in American Diplomacy at University-College Dublin; and have been elected to the governing council of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. I am currently a member the Board of Advisors for the North Korean International Documentation Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars in DC, and was recently named to the Distinguished Speakers



Bureau of the Association for Asian Studies. I have given invited lectures across the globe, with appearances at Cambridge, MIT, Virginia Military Institute, BYU, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, the University of Durham, Arizona State, and many more; in fact, I believe that it is a sign of my standing in the field that a few years ago, the National Security Agency's Center for Cryptologic History selected me to deliver the annual Henry Schorrek Memorial Lectures. I am also a semi-regular commentator on the radio and television, with appearances on NPR, C-Span, the BBC, TRT (Turkey), and local stations, and with op eds in such publications as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *Korea Times*, and the *Columbus Dispatch*, as well as on prominent policy-related websites like *The Diplomat*, *The Hill*, *National Interest*, and *38North*. And I have visited you in Little Rock, where I gave the annual Formica Endowed Lecture at the invitation of the History Department a few years ago.

Leading a school like the Clinton School, of course, requires more than just academic accomplishment. Here, too, I believe that my background is very much in line with the focus of this position. My administrative skills are best embodied by my decade of leadership at Ohio State's interdisciplinary East Asian Studies Center. Although the East Asian Center is an internationally recognized, Title VI-funded program, I began my career by building our Korea Institute largely from scratch, overseeing numerous initiatives that generally echo the demands of your position. Under my leadership, the institute developed dozens of partnerships with both local and international organizations, and acted as the liaison between many different university stakeholders about all matters connected to the study of East Asia. Each year, I ran a major lecture series that brought a dozen speakers to campus from different disciplines, and directed a series of larger events that typically included focused academic speakers and conferences, cultural and artistic performances, and professional training workshops. Fund-raising was also a significant component of my position, and under my direction, IKS won programming grants from such organizations as the Korea Foundation, the Association for Asian Studies, the Korean Consulate and more, and had enough success in private fundraising and outreach that we recently established a major Korean cultural performance program for the university. I also played a central role in writing our successful Title VI grant proposal in 2014, which won \$2.4 million over four years from the federal Department of Education for international programs, and which was successfully renewed for almost the same amount in 2018. We also worked with a wide range of local stakeholders, including businesses, government agencies, schools, and more, coordinating programs with the Columbus Korean Chamber of Commerce, the Columbus Council of World Affairs, and the governor's jobs council, along with the Consul General in Chicago and the Embassy in Washington DC. My years as institute director also exposed me to the less glamorous but necessary administrative tasks that are critical to the success of any organization. I maintained budgets and evaluated staff; worked with dozens of departments and offices in the massive OSU bureaucracy; represented the university at conferences and recruiting efforts; and of course, handled the not uncommon crises that seem to spring up frequently in our profession.

After a successful nine years as institute director, I was promoted to my current position as director of the larger East Asia Center. Here, I have continued many similar tasks while accepting even more administrative responsibility, as I supervise a team of seven staff and faculty, manage a large annual budget, oversee multiple grant initiatives, and coordinate with various branches of the university, the community, and state and local officials. In just the last year, I established new partnerships with community colleges and HBCUs across the region; implemented and directed a diversity lecture series on behalf of all five of OSU's Area Studies Centers; helped develop numerous programs to support



faculty research and collaboration; serve on more college and university-wide committees than I can count, ranging from student scholarships to faculty grants; developed a podcast series for the East Asia Center; won a major interdisciplinary grant to create an East Asian-Central European post-doc position; created a statewide Korean poetry competition for secondary schools; developed new courses on topics ranging from global pandemics to Japanese anime; and created a professionalization program (jointly with the University of Wisconsin) to better train our students for post-graduation employment. I have also been twice nominated for the university's diversity award in recognition of my wide-ranging efforts, and am right now leading a number of joint efforts on behalf of OSU's Office of International Affairs and our Office of Diversity and Inclusion to develop a few specific programs designed to encourage social justice and anti-racism efforts in the local community. Overall, it has been a productive period of sustained success, and I am proud to note that, in my ten years of administrative service with the East Asia Center, I have received the highest possible scores on every one of my annual evaluations through the Office of International Affairs.

Perhaps my largest contribution to the East Asia Center, however, has been in the area of innovative instruction and curricular development, which I think would be particularly relevant to your position during this difficult environment. Some of my efforts along these lines are smaller, like working with department chairs to offer inducements to faculty members to develop more interdisciplinary and innovative East Asia-related courses, or my role in creating a Mid-Career Professional Track M.A. in Interdisciplinary East Asian Studies. Others were more complicated. I am particularly proud of my efforts as part of a small team of East Asia specialists from across Big Ten universities that won a \$2 million grant to develop an e-school network of Korean-related classes to be shared, live and interactive via the web, among the participating universities. These on-line courses have been tremendously successful, with dozens now offered each year to hundreds of students, and they have garnered attention across the globe as the first such effort of its kind; indeed, the program has now grown to include a study abroad component and a faculty-student collaborative research program. As OSU, like every other school across the nation, has been forced to adapt its teaching programs to meet the exigencies of the COVID-19 crisis, I have found these years of developing such non-traditional methods of delivery to be vital in helping me to implement "outside-the-box" classroom approaches that have paid dividends.

It is, however, not just my administrative background at the East Asia Center that makes me a good fit for this opportunity. I have been a faculty fellow at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies—OSU's prestigious interdisciplinary think tank on public policy—for almost two decades, and have served there in various capacities ranging from participating in grant and award committees to organizing speakers and conferences. I also spent three years as the head of our LeFevre Scholars Service-Learning Honors Program. In this role, I annually directed a small group of honors students through a year-long seminar devoted to social justice issues (usually focusing on topics such as poverty, race and homelessness), while also overseeing a significant community service requirement. Under my leadership (albeit with significant input from the students, who designed many of the programs themselves), we volunteered in underprivileged schools, built housing for the poor, cleaned up local rivers and forests, and helped run a youth education project for poor children in partnership with a local science museum. It also engaged me in additional administrative service, as I chaired the selection committee, maintained budgets and records, organized fund-raising efforts, and coordinated with our community partners on behalf of the program. Last year, I was elected by my peers to a 4-year term on



OSU's Faculty Senate for the College of Arts and Sciences, where I have been involved in a number of curricular and governing matters connected to the college overall. I also spent more than a decade as the coordinator of the History Department at OSU-Newark, a smaller OSU campus that caters to a diverse student body and prides itself on having a more personal and flexible educational approach. Here, too, I accepted administrative responsibilities that would help with your position. I oversaw a small department of eight historians of various ranks, which required me to set schedules, make curricular decisions, oversee budgets, help assess faculty performance, and more. Innovation was key to my efforts to grow the program during a time of decreasing national enrollment in the liberal arts, but I achieved a record of success here as well through the encouragement of more experimental teaching programs such as hybrid classes and "flipped" classroom styles, better efforts to engage with the student body, and the development of expanded internship and service-learning programs.

I am equally proud of my teaching record. My teaching style engages the students in dialogue and challenges them to make independent decisions. I integrate a large number of primary documents into the classroom ranging from the expected, such as snippets from George Kennan's "Long Telegram" and Ho Chi Minh's 1945 declaration of independence for Vietnam, to the more unusual, including clips from the television shows *Star Trek*, *All in the Family*, and *Spongebob Squarepants*; I begin each class by playing music from the era to be discussed and connecting it to the themes of the day; and I even have a tie that corresponds to each lecture. OSU utilizes a five-point scale in its student rating system, and my average overall score is a 4.7, one of the highest in the College. One of my proudest moments in the profession came in 2005 when I was awarded Ohio State's highest teaching prize, the Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching. A few years ago, I was even selected by the Ohio Academy of History for their Distinguished Teacher Prize, an award given to one person annually as the best history teacher in the state. I also served for six years on the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Teaching Committee, resigning only when I was elected to the Society's governing council. I should note as well that over the past years, I have won significant teaching-related grants from both the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History to establish week-long teaching seminars at OSU, one for high school teachers and the other for graduate students and junior faculty, and, last year I was named to the Distinguished Speakers Bureau of the Association of Asian Studies.

Thank you for considering my application. I have included my CV and list of references with this letter, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

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