



February 23, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed please find my current academic vita in response to the advertisement in the www.higheredjobs.com for the position of Dean of the School of Business and Professional Studies at Truman State University. This position is extremely appealing to me, and I would like to use this cover letter to communicate my interests to you. Specifically, the letter serves to: (1) summarize my major accomplishments as Dean of the Dr. Sam Pack College of Business (DSPCOB) at Tarleton State University (TSU), (2) outline my administrative experiences, (3) elaborate on my interests in the position, and (4) share my administrative philosophy with you.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS DEAN AT TSU

- * 2018, started “paying out”, in the form of course-load reduction, the banked hour accumulated due to teaching graduate classes; the number of banked hours were in the hundreds.
- * 2018, worked with the Institutional Advancement to establish the Russell L. Moore Endowed Scholarship; the amount of scholarship exceeded \$1.6 million in December 2022.
- * 2019, went through reduction in force due to the economic downturn in Texas; not only did the DSPCOB stay intact, one staff position was added.
- * 2019, launched Tarleton Tartan Project, a retail operation run by DSPCOB students, to provide students with additional experiential learning opportunity. With student’s active participation, the Project started making profits about two years ago.
- * 2019, continued to show positive growth under the negative impact from COVID 19.
- * 2020, activated DSPCOB Student Advisory Board to support student recruitment and community engagement activities.
- * 2020, worked with department heads to plan for the launch of various MS programs (i.e., MS-Business Analytics, MS-Logistics and Supply Chair, MS-Marketing, MS-Finance, Ph.D. in Management); the students of these programs will be on campus in 2024, 2025, and 2026.
- * 2021, completed the reaffirmation of ACBSP accreditation; the reaffirmation was officially granted in January 2022, and all degrees/programs in the DSPCOB (i.e., Master of Accounting, MBA, 3 MS degrees, BBA with 8 majors, BS with 2 majors, BAAS with 2 majors, and BSAS) were officially reaffirmed.
- * 2022, completed of AACSB initial accreditation; all degrees/programs in the DSPCOB (i.e., Master of Accounting, MBA, 3 MS degrees, BBA with 8 majors, BS with 2 majors, BAAS with 2 majors, and BSAS) were officially accredited on July 19, 2022.

- * 2022, worked with the Institutional Advancement to establish the Paul and Courtney Paschall Endowed Scholarship; the scholarship totaled \$25,000.
- * 2022, continued to grow the DSPCOB through various degrees (e.g., Ph.D.) and programs (e.g., MS-Marketing, MS-Finance).

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

My administrative experience started as Chair of the Department of MIS and Marketing, a newly formed department, in the Dillard College of Business Administration (DCOBA) at Midwestern State University (MWSU) in 2008, and upon DCOBA's re-organization in 2011, I assumed the Chair role of the Department of Management and Marketing. Concurrent with my role as Department Chair, I was appointed Graduate/MBA Coordinator in 2010. After coming to TSU in 2014, I took on the position of the Department Head of the Department of Marketing and Computer Information Systems (MCIS), a newly established department. Then, in 2016, I was appointed Associate Dean of the DSPCOB at TSU. After a national search in 2018, I was appointed Dean of the DSPCOB. During these time periods, I have maintained my qualification as a faculty member by being actively involved in teaching and scholarly activities as required by various accreditation bodies. Finally, I went back to full-time teaching as a faculty member on February 1, 2023.

INTERESTS IN THE POSITION AT TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Before elaborating on my interests in the position, I would like to share with you my reasons of stepping away from the position of Dean of the DSPCOB at TSU. With my experience of going through AACSB initial accreditation as a faculty member and department chair, and MBA coordinator at MWSU, I was employed by TSU in 2014 as Department Head of Marketing and CIS to help the DSPCOB go through the initial accreditation. Throughout the years, although my roles and administrative responsibilities have evolved as I moved from Department Head to Associate Dean, and to Dean, the main reason that I was hired (i.e., going through AACSB initial accreditation) has not changed. Now that the DSPCOB is accredited, I believe I am ready to look for and face new as well as different challenges. After my communications with the President and the Provost at TSU, I made the decision to resign from the dean position, effective February 1, 2023, to be a full-time faculty member while searching for and preparing myself for new and different challenges.

The School of Business and Professional Studies at Truman State University interests me greatly for the following main reasons. First, although it is challenging to have several unique disciplines in the same school, there are plenty of opportunities for students and faculty to explore. For example, exercise science, nursing, counseling, etc. provide business students with contexts to apply what they learn. At the same time, business students will be more marketable and competitive with technical skills/competencies from other disciplines. Also, regardless of the disciplines, students are to be in a for-profit or not-for-profit "business world" after they graduate. Lastly, from the perspective of faculty, there are unlimited amount of potentials to explore for collaboration in terms of research and pedagogy.

Additionally, the size of the University and the School is extremely appealing. After having spent time with colleges and universities of different sizes, I realize that it is indeed a luxury to be able to work with students and faculty/staff closely and directly, and, more importantly, I learn to value and appreciate the opportunity to do so. On the other hand, since the University and the College are still relatively small, there is plenty of room for all to grow while maintaining their unique identities.

Finally, my experiences in AACSB definitely benefit the College and the University significantly. First, I have led the DSPCOB at TSU through the initial accreditation with 2017 Standards in 2022. Also, I am currently serving as AACSB Initial Accreditation Mentor with National Chi Nan University, Taiwan, following 2020 Standards. Lastly, I have gone through business school accreditations with different roles, earlier as a faculty member, then as a department chair/head as well as associate dean, finally, as dean. These roles gave me the opportunities to look at and work on accreditation from different perspectives, and allow me to work with various personnel and stakeholders effectively.

ADMINISTRATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Leadership

The role of dean is multifaceted. To carry out this role, it is necessary to have a leadership style that emphasizes empowerment, open communication, collaboration, role-modeling, and total inclusion. In my view, faculty and staff should be empowered with the maximum amount of space to perform and grow. As long as it is exercised according to the guidelines and requirements specified by the state, university, college, and various accreditation bodies, the empowerment should occur in the classroom as well as outside of the classroom for faculty, and in the workplace for staff. In addition, in order to offer and share a dean's vision, there should be open communication on a regular basis, and the communication should be two-way, vertically as well as horizontally. In order to avoid the drawback of one-way communication, a leader should have the capability and capacity to listen more than talk. With regard to collaboration, I believe a cohesive whole has always been, and will always be, greater than the sum of individuals. A leader with a mindset of collaboration enables an organization to operate efficiently and effectively, and subsequently, to grow healthily. As far as role-modeling is concerned, leaders exist because there are followers, and followers are willing to follow leaders because leaders are role models. Thus, leaders lead by doing instead of giving orders. More importantly, they are the first ones to show the way and often the last ones to quit. Finally, as a result of empowerment, open communication, collaboration, and role model, there is, naturally, a total inclusion. That is, both faculty and staff have a sense of belongingness to the institution.

Student Success

Students are both raw materials and customers. It is our ultimate responsibility, as educators, to turn the raw materials into quality products. It is also our responsibility, as a service provider, to provide the customers with a caring, yet challenging, environment to learn. A caring

environment identifies students' potential, and nurtures fulfillment and growth accordingly, while a challenging environment motivates students to learn and stimulates the education system to improve on a continuous basis.

In addition to enhancing their knowledge base, students need extensive hands-on experiences and broad perspectives to approach different subject matter. Therefore, higher education institutions ought to offer courses that are more experientially oriented (e.g., real projects from the community), and more cross-discipline oriented (e.g., creativity, decision making) to increase students' marketability and to warrant their future success.

Finally, in order to stay current with students regarding their learning, it is essential that academic administrators (e.g., deans, department chairs/heads) remain well-aware of what is happening in the classroom. The awareness provides academic administrators with the up-to-date substance, knowledge, and techniques necessary to ensure student success.

Inter-Disciplinary Collaboration

Inter-disciplinary collaboration is conceivably the best strategy to overcome the obstacle of limited resources. Business schools/colleges should follow the philosophy of forming "strategic alliances" to expand their degrees/programs/offerings. Outside of the schools/colleges, there are ample potential partners (e.g., engineering, kinesiology, nursing, communications, etc.) for them to work with. Additionally, with the collaboration, students will be able to acquire abstract business knowledge with concrete contexts from collaborating partners, and subsequently enhance their learning and make them more marketable.

The offering of several concentrations in the MS-Management program is an outcome of DSPCOB's effort of inter-disciplinary collaboration. For example, the concentration of Recreation and Sports is a collaboration between Management Department and Kinesiology Department, and the concentration of Social Media Strategy is a collaboration between Management Department and Communications Department.

Community Engagement

Education does not exist by itself; it is built and grows in communities (e.g., the university, the local community, the regional community, etc.). The relationship between education and the communities is reciprocal, and the relationship should be built and maintained keenly and meaningfully. In the simplest term, education provides output, in the form of graduates, to the community, and the community provides input, in the form of new students and resources, back to education. Specifically, solid working relationships with members in the community provide opportunities for students to understand the importance of being engaged citizens and to engage in more experiential learning (e.g., internships, real projects), for the community members to exchange mutually beneficial and valuable information, and for the College to review and revise its curricula based on the first-hand industry input.

For example, the DSPCOB has hosted the Entrepreneurs of Erath Business Plan Competition since 2015. The Competition featured contestants from the county where the University is

located, from the students within the DSPCOB, and from the students/faculty from the University. Additionally, the Executive in Residence, an annual event, invites executives from the community to share their experiences with both the university and the local communities. Finally, the Advances in Business Research Conference/Journal hosted by the DSPCOB engages academic community worldwide.

Accreditation

Personally, accreditation is, and should be, an outcome of a higher education's pursuit of quality. Any institution that offers quality education on a continuous basis should be able to be accredited and stay accredited. Academic excellence and faculty scholarship are reflections of high-quality education. Therefore, in order to provide quality education, academic standards should be monitored, assessed, and elevated, and faculty's scholarly activities should be encouraged, recognized, and rewarded.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and the search committee to discuss my qualifications in greater detail. This is my contact information: 817-239-5096 (cell), 682-200-7186 (office), shao@tarleton.edu, or chrisyshao13@gmail.com. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Y. Shao". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "C".

Chris Y. Shao, Ph.D.
Professor of Marketing