

March 2026

**Dean Search Committee**

School of Business and Professional Studies  
Truman State University  
c/o Buffkin / Baker | Ken Carrick & Janny DeLoache

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I write to apply for the position of Dean of the School of Business and Professional Studies at Truman State University with genuine conviction about the fit. I am a **Professor of Management** and as the **William S. Perlroth Endowed Professor of Business** and **Chair of the Department of Entrepreneurship, International Business, and Strategy** at Quinnipiac University; and as **Co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Organization Management Journal***, I have spent thirteen years embodying the Teacher-Scholar model that defines Truman's identity: publishing actively, teaching with documented excellence, and serving my institution with sustained commitment at every level from department to board of trustees.

What draws me specifically to Truman is not simply the position, but the institutional character. Missouri's public commitment to liberal arts education: rigorous, accessible, civic-minded, grounded in outcomes that matter beyond the degree itself, is precisely the model I believe produces the most capable graduates, the most resilient institutions, and the most defensible claim on public investment. Truman's 29 consecutive years as the #1 public university in the Midwest Region is not an accident; it is the consequence of institutional choices made consistently over time. My candidacy is an offer to steward those choices, deepen them, and extend them to a recently reorganized School of Business and Professional Studies that has both an exceptional foundation and genuine room to grow.

I also note, with some care, that I published a peer-reviewed study in 2025 titled "From Business School Dean to University President: Leadership Lessons from Dr. Judy Olian" (*Organization Management Journal*). I cite this not as a credential but as an honest signal: I think seriously and empirically about what makes academic executives effective, and I have been doing so while simultaneously practicing academic leadership as a Department Chair, Faculty Senate Chair, and Board of Trustees member. I do not approach this candidacy with an untested theory of decanal leadership.

<b>12+</b> Years Faculty at Quinnipiac	<b>4+</b> Years Dept. Chair	<b>150+</b> Scholarly Works	<b>150+</b> Courses Taught	<b>2026</b> Byrd Award Winner
--	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------	----------------------------------

---

## AT A GLANCE: ALIGNMENT WITH TRUMAN'S PRIORITIES

---

TRUMAN'S PRIORITY	MY EVIDENCE
Terminal degree; tenure at full professor level	Ph.D., Organizational Leadership (U of Minnesota, 2013); tenured Full Professor, Quinnipiac University, 2023
Significant academic & administrative experience	12+ years faculty; 4+ years Department Chair; Faculty Senate Chair; Board of Trustees member
Teacher-Scholar model commitment	GTI >4.25/5.0 across 150+ courses; 130+ scholarly works; 2026 Byrd Award; 2025 EAM Fellow
Liberal arts & sciences commitment	Research on civic leadership, wicked problems & public good; Nonprofit Management course developer; Army War College invitee
Strategic vision for recently reorganized school	Led departmental reorganization and curriculum reform at QU; chaired University Education Committee 2018–2022
External grants & multi-constituency experience	BioBusiness Alliance/Deloitte consulting; Partners for Change; World Bank & UN-FAO; Gates Foundation invitee
AACSB & accreditation experience	Graduate Assessment Coordinator, QU SoB 2014–2020; School Research Quality Committee Chair 2021–2023
Interdisciplinary school leadership	Research spans management, HRD, public policy, health systems, AI, and nanotechnology, bridges disciplines naturally

---

### I. THE TEACHER-SCHOLAR MODEL: LIVED, NOT CLAIMED

---

Truman's Teacher-Scholar model asks for something genuinely demanding: excellence in the classroom and a continuing research agenda, sustained simultaneously, without either becoming a casualty of the other. My record demonstrates that this balance is not aspirational for me, it is my actual professional life.

On the teaching side, I have taught more than 150 courses across undergraduate, MBA, executive, and doctoral levels at five institutions over thirteen years. My Global Teaching Index exceeds 4.25 overall, reaching 4.37 in recent evaluations across 98 course assessments. I received Quinnipiac's Center for Excellence in Teaching Award in 2018 and was named Outstanding Faculty Scholar of the Year the same year, which is not a coincidence but a demonstration that the two are not in tension when both are taken seriously. I developed nine new courses in direct response to emerging market and pedagogical needs, and I teach from my own research, using live frameworks from my scholarship as primary course material.

On the scholarship side, my record includes 150+ scholarly works, including 41 peer-reviewed journal articles and 10 Peer-reviewed Journal editorials, 1,800+ Google Scholar citations, two books, and active editorial leadership as Co-Editor-in-Chief of a peer-reviewed management journal. My recent paper on the Nested Complexity framework for AI governance was recognized as the 2026 recipient of the Marilyn Y. Byrd Excellence in HRD Research-to-Practice Award, given annually by AHRD and SAGE for the publication judged to make the most significant contribution to translating theory into practice. I am a 2025 Fellow of the Eastern Academy of Management.

These are not competing claims. They are the same claim: I am a scholar who teaches seriously, and a teacher whose scholarship is relevant to what students need to know. That convergence is what the Teacher-Scholar model requires of a Dean, and I can model it credibly for the 70 faculty of the School of Business and Professional Studies.

## **II. ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP AND THE VISION FOR A REORGANIZED SCHOOL**

---

The School of Business and Professional Studies at Truman has been recently reorganized, a fact the leadership profile presents openly and that I read as both an opportunity and a test. A recently reorganized school needs a Dean who can build a coherent identity across disciplinary units that may not share a common history, articulate a unifying vision that faculty from business, communication disorders, exercise science, nursing, psychology, counseling, and education can genuinely inhabit, and do all of this while maintaining the operational stability the school's multiple accreditations require.

This is not a generic description of decanal work. It is a specific challenge that requires someone who has navigated complexity, curricular, interpersonal, and structural, at scale. I have done this. As Department Chair of a department created out of the amalgamation of three departments: entrepreneurship and strategy, international business, and organizational leadership at Quinnipiac, I have managed the competing priorities of diverse faculty subgroups, aligned departmental direction with school-level strategy, and built the internal trust that makes collective action possible. As Chair of the University Education Committee from 2018 to 2022, I oversaw curriculum policy reform affecting all schools and departments, including the political negotiation required to move curriculum innovation through faculty governance. As Chair of the Faculty Senate for the 2024–25 academic year and as a member of the Board of Trustees, I have engaged university-level decision-making at the highest levels.

### **A Vision Grounded in Truman's Commitments**

Truman's strategic plan is organized around three overarching commitments: Organizational Excellence, Student Success and Achievement, and Professional and Societal Impacts. My vision for the School of Business and Professional Studies aligns directly with each.

Organizational Excellence means building a culture of continuous improvement within the School, not only in accreditation documentation but in how faculty develop their teaching, how staff are supported, and how the Dean models the standards expected of others. I would approach the School's assessment infrastructure not as a compliance burden but as a genuine tool for understanding what is working and what needs investment.

Student Success and Achievement at Truman is anchored in high-impact learning experiences and pathways from college to career. The School's applied learning programs, the Speech and Hearing Clinic, the Army ROTC connection, and the Regional Professional Development Center are not peripheral activities. They are expressions of Truman's core educational philosophy, and I would invest in them accordingly. I would also prioritize mentoring and advising infrastructure that ensures students from all backgrounds can access the experiential opportunities the School offers.

Professional and Societal Impacts is where my research program is most directly relevant. My work on wicked problems, civic leadership, AI governance, and organizational effectiveness addresses the conditions graduates will face as professionals and citizens. I have taught Nonprofit Management and Public Service Leadership precisely because I believe business education that ignores the social

context of professional life is incomplete. This conviction aligns naturally with Truman's vision of graduates as citizen-leaders committed to service.

### **III. INTERDISCIPLINARITY AS STRENGTH, NOT COMPLICATION**

---

A Dean of a school that spans business, health professions, communication disorders, psychology, education, and applied behavior analysis must be genuinely comfortable with disciplinary breadth, not as a political accommodation but as an intellectual orientation. My career demonstrates this comfort authentically.

My doctoral research crossed organizational leadership, technology policy, agricultural education, and public policy. My publications appear in journals ranging from management and HRD to science and technology policy, healthcare risk management, consumer policy, nanotechnology, and public health. I have taught strategic planning, organizational budgeting, ethics, leadership theory, sales management, and nonprofit management at the undergraduate, MBA, MS, and doctoral levels. I have served on dissertation committees in leadership studies covering law enforcement, healthcare, technology, and organizational development.

This breadth is not accidental. It reflects a scholarly disposition that finds interdisciplinary connections productive rather than threatening, and that understands complex organizational problems, the kind Truman's graduates will face, cannot be solved from within a single discipline. For a recently reorganized school whose constituent programs span the liberal arts-professional studies spectrum, a Dean who can move credibly across those disciplines while building a unified school identity is not a luxury; it is a structural requirement.

### **IV. ACCREDITATION, ASSESSMENT, AND ACADEMIC QUALITY**

---

The School of Business and Professional Studies carries one of the most demanding accreditation portfolios in higher education: AACSB, AAQEP, ASHA, CAA, CACREP, CCNE, Missouri DESE, and MSBN. Managing this portfolio requires a Dean who understands that each accrediting body has its own logic, standards, and documentation requirements, and who can build the internal culture and administrative infrastructure to sustain continuous compliance without making accreditation the dominant story the school tells itself.

As Graduate Assessment Coordinator for the School of Business at Quinnipiac from 2014 to 2020, I designed and administered the graduate-level assessment systems that underpin AACSB review. As Chair of the School Research Quality Committee from 2021 to 2023, I was specifically responsible for ensuring that faculty scholarship met accreditation standards of NECHE, not only in volume but in quality classification and alignment with mission. I understand that AACSB Assurance of Learning is not a reporting exercise but a continuous feedback loop that, when done well, improves curriculum and teaching. Prior to Academia, I led the Food Research Institute in obtaining ISO 17025 accreditation. The first in the West Africa sub-region.

I have also participated in curriculum assurance of learning design through the University Education Committee at Quinnipiac, where I worked alongside accreditation staff to align institutional general education requirements with regional accreditation (NECHE) standards. A Dean who has navigated both specialized (AACSB) and regional accreditation from the inside, and who has chaired the governance body responsible for institutional curriculum compliance, brings practical experience that goes beyond familiarity with the terminology.

---

## **V. EXTERNAL GRANTS, CONSTITUENCIES, AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

---

The leadership profile specifically calls for success securing external grants, especially for programs involving multiple constituencies or academic units, and experience with alumni, donors, and private foundations. My record here spans three decades and four continents.

As a Senior Research Fellow with Partners for Change, I worked with major private foundations, including as an invited participant in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's convening on Diversity and Inclusion to design research-informed strategies for institutional change for Kellogg and McKnight Foundations. I co-authored industry white papers with Deloitte Consulting for the BioBusiness Alliance of Minnesota, producing the Destination 2025 strategic framework for Minnesota's food and animal health industries. I have consulted for the World Bank and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization on research performance management. I co-authored a book (Peterson, Yawson et al., 2020, Palgrave/Springer) on social finance and impact investing, and a forthcoming volume on sustainable finance (Peterson, Webb & Yawson, 2025, Springer), reflecting sustained engagement with how external capital can be structured to serve institutional mission.

For a public university in a regional economy like Kirksville, the most important external partnerships are often not the largest donors but the most sustained relationships: local employers who provide internship placements and advisory engagement, state agencies whose workforce priorities shape enrollment, and alumni whose professional networks create opportunities for students. I would approach external constituency development at Truman with the same strategic intentionality I bring to curriculum and faculty development, prioritizing depth of relationship over breadth of contact list.

---

## **VI. LIBERAL ARTS AND PUBLIC EDUCATION: A GENUINE COMMITMENT**

---

I want to address something directly that some candidates for positions like this one might be careful to navigate: I am not applying to a liberal arts institution despite my background; I am applying because of it. My research on wicked problems, civic leadership, and organizational complexity is fundamentally motivated by the conviction that education exists to develop people capable of contributing to something larger than their own careers. My work on social finance, community engagement, and the public responsibilities of organizations reflects a view of business education that Truman's mission statement articulates better than most: graduates should be citizen-leaders committed to service, globally competitive, and capable of thriving in a multicultural world.

I developed a course in Nonprofit Management, not because it was required, but because I believe students who understand the full institutional ecology of civic and professional life are better equipped for whatever sector they enter. I have been a guest speaker at the Army War College on developing leaders for disruptive change. I have published on the ethical dimensions of AI governance, the accountability dimensions of organizational performance, and the conditions under which organizations serve the public interest. These are not additions to my academic identity; they are its core.

Truman's distinction as Missouri's only public liberal arts and sciences university is not a legacy constraint; it is a strategic advantage. In a period of growing skepticism about the value of higher education generally and business education specifically, an institution that can demonstrate, through curriculum, student outcomes, and faculty scholarship, that business education done right is a form of civic investment will be more resilient, more differentiated, and more defensible than institutions that compete solely on program breadth or employment statistics.

Truman State University has built something genuinely valuable: a community of teacher-scholars committed to a public mission, serving students who deserve the full benefits of that model. I would be honored to bring my experience, scholarship, and conviction about this kind of education to the Dean's role.

I welcome a conversation at your earliest convenience and am prepared to visit campus at the committee's invitation. My curriculum vitae is submitted alongside this letter per the application instructions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Yawson". The signature is stylized with a large, circular flourish on the left side.

**Robert M. Yawson, Ph.D.**

Professor of Management and William S. Perloth Endowed Professor of Business  
Chair, Department of Entrepreneurship, International Business & Strategy  
School of Business, Quinnipiac University, Hamden, Connecticut  
Co-Editor-in-Chief, *Organization Management Journal* (Emerald Publishing)

