February 17, 2016

Senior Vice Provost Doug Blandy  
Chair, Dean Search Committee  
School of Journalism and Communication  
University of Oregon  
Eugene, Oregon 97412

Dear Provost Blandy and Members of the Search Committee:

With great enthusiasm, I apply for the position of Dean of the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication. I embrace this unparalleled opportunity to lead the school into its second century and to make a significant difference in our evolving world of media and higher education.

Three major factors motivate me to apply. The first is the quality of the people who study, teach, research, create and lead our multiple fields in the SOJC, as well as the innovative, meaningful work they do. The eclectic balance and blend of SOJC faculty expertise in research and practice may be unique in journalism and communication schools worldwide. The pioneering, entrepreneurial spirit of our students and alumni and the dedication of our staff, donors and friends further set the SOJC apart from other journalism/communication schools. The second major factor impelling my decision is my deep belief that the SOJC is in the midst of transformative advancement and is well positioned to achieve world-class prominence. Third, I feel I am the right person to continue leading the school as we boldly move into our second 100 years. I’m prepared. I’m ready. I understand the challenges and opportunities ahead.

My qualifications for the position are as unique as the SOJC. My work is at the intersection of research and professional expertise and is guided by a driving passion for originality and excellence grounded in ethical decision-making. My experience as an award-winning and inventive scholar, teacher and leader over 35 years in both private and public universities provides a deep understanding of the challenges facing higher education. My professional experience as a reporter, editor, photographer and designer for newspapers, magazines, radio and television provides a broad understanding of the critical centrality of journalistic media to a democratic society and the challenges journalism and media face in today’s constantly evolving media landscape. Both my research and my administrative leadership have depth and breadth enhanced by a rich and wide-ranging network of interdisciplinary scholarly and professional connections. My almost 16 years as a dedicated faculty member at the UO and in the SOJC, with eight years as an administrator, provide institutional knowledge of the multiple and complex challenges facing the university and the school. And, perhaps most important, my vision for the SOJC’s pivotal role in the future success of the University of Oregon and as a world-class leader in media scholarship, practice, education and service in the public interest is already becoming a reality.

An added advantage is that I know what this deanship entails. Leading the school forward through implementation of the university’s first and now second collective bargaining agreement, through a major faculty hiring initiative, and to adoption of what I believe is the
school's first comprehensive strategic plan has been rewarding and has enhanced my professional growth and preparation to continue leading the SOJC to the highest levels of achievement. As we embark on our second 100 years, in a university facing momentous change, in a time of major disruptions in media and higher education alike, we already have strong momentum. Fascinating times, awesome challenges and remarkable opportunities lie ahead! I offer both continuity and the courage to embrace the future.

Look at what we've done together in the past two-and-a-half years:

- Increased full-time faculty from 38 to 54
- Reduced the student: faculty ratio from 56:1 to a full-time-equivalent ratio of 31:1
- Reorganized the support structures of the school for effectiveness and efficiency
- Implemented two collective bargaining agreements, reviewing/revising/creating internal governance documents, faculty evaluation and promotion policies, and faculty workload policies
- Launched the Agora Journalism Center, the gathering place for innovation in communication and civic engagement, and the Agora Faculty Fellowship Program
- Doubled the number of PhD students admitted each year
- Garnered significant faculty, student and staff awards, including Faculty Excellence Awards, Early Career Research Award, Innovation and Impact Award for Research, Institutional Innovation in Equity and Inclusion Award, MLK Awards, Arthur Page and Public Relations Society of America honors, top research paper and book awards, top 10 awards in Hearst Writing and Multimedia competitions, multiple Emmy awards, Gold Crown and Pacemaker awards, the National Advertising Championship (we're No. 1 in the country), and more!
- Increased diversity among faculty and students
- Increased the amount of external funding significantly, with grants from the National Science Foundation, Online News Association, National Institute for Transportation and Communities, U.S. Forestry Service, Jackson Foundation, Knight Foundation and others
- Strengthened external and internal communication about the SOJC through an improved website, student recruiting Viewbook and our annual Yearbook to alumni and donors
- Launched SOJC's Centennial Celebration
- Created the Advanced Data Analytics Lab
- Raised close to $8 million in Foundation funds
- Adopted and implemented a new assessment plan
- Developed and adopted a dynamic strategic plan that lays the foundation for ongoing programmatic development and evaluation to ensure SOJC's future success and sustainability

We accomplished all of this and more while the university transitioned among three presidents, two provosts, five interim deans; and while changing university and school faculty governance structures, right-sizing the SOJC faculty, adding an office and lab facility, meeting the ongoing needs of our growing student population, and sustaining significant budget cuts.

The SOJC is like a startup with a legacy. If named SOJC Dean, I will continue to support that innovative spirit in all that we do, as we continue to serve as a seminal model of change and excellence through our practices of teaching and researching, creating and reporting, telling the stories that are the bedrock of our First Amendment and the foundation of democracy.
At the same time, we will need to focus our vision, balance our budget and direct resources of funds, time, talent and intellect toward owning effective innovation and sustaining excellence in a few cohesive and critical areas. Although we will work together to identify and codify specific areas of focused excellence, here are four overarching constellations of SOJC initiatives that come to my mind:

- **Conceptual innovation in media research and practice.** Examples: Civic engagement, restorative narrative, crisis communication, political economy of media, ecology of media, emerging media, design thinking, media representation, queer theory, visual ethics, media management, experimental methodologies, disciplinary integration.

- **Global health of earth, body, mind.** Examples: Science and Memory, Sustainable Cities, transportation studies, forestry studies, sports media, environmental writing, science reporting, education reporting, arts reporting, food studies, ethics, social justice, developmental and international communication.

- **Equity and inclusion.** Examples: Latino Roots, LGBTQ studies, disability studies, diversity in media production and representation, media in developing countries, globalization studies

- **Groundbreaking curriculum for evolving media.** Examples: Creative Strategist Model, Gateway to Media, Writing Central, WordsWorth, data analytics, experimental media, experimental research methods, integrative theory development, experiential learning, expanded internship programs, industry partnerships, media entrepreneurship, documentary, virtual platforms, hybrid online courses.

Clearly, there is great opportunity for interdisciplinary and topical collaboration among those areas. That’s as it should be in an integrative environment where research informs practice, practice informs research, both research and practice inform teaching (and vice versa), and all work together in service to the public interest and the democratic project. Together we will define the areas where we can make the most significant impact on society and culture. What are we doing that no one else is doing? What must we do that no one else can or will?

We are an ecosystem. The school itself is a medium, a dynamic environment with sites of excellence and sites that need substantial work. The school is part of the larger ecosystem of a major research university with six professional schools. The university is part of the nation is part of the world. All rely on ethical and innovative communication processes to gather, organize and distribute information that is foundational to cultural applications of truth and justice in our democracy. We are interdependent and interactive. But as a school and university of diverse minds and bodies, we have agency and collective power to effect change at multiple levels. We have an opportunity to exemplify excellent, meaningful and caring communication through what and how we teach, research, create and do. Through its research and creative/professional enterprise, the SOJC can catalyze the integration of disciplines in the university and beyond to better serve our global society.

The heart and soul of the SOJC is people: the almost 13,000 alumni who have forged a legacy through their years as professionals and scholars, donors who have invested millions of dollars in the school because they believe in our mission, faculty and staff who are committed to the work of the school, and, most of all, the students – the pulsing stream of new life and energy that will make the world a better place.
I know what the SOJC is about – its heart and mind – and I have witnessed and guided the school’s leap of faith into the future. I can see how we are evolving into the leading school of journalism and communication in the world. I believe deeply in our mission to create knowledge and to prepare the media scholars and professionals who can help solve the world’s problems through ethically grounded, creative and innovative, courageous and meaningful research and practice. I want to continue working with our remarkably eclectic faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends to draw on our collective wisdom. Together we can continue to advance the school and its ambitious aspiration. And continuing to lead the school as dean into its second 100 years is the right next step in my own trajectory of wanting to make a difference through my work and to bring to full fruition the excellence we have initiated for the next 100 years.

Our Eric Allen Outstanding Young Alumnus Award winner for 2015, Robert X. Fogarty, ended his acceptance speech by citing an old quote: “Comparison is the thief of joy.”¹ He had shared stories of his time in the SOJC. Robert said to us, "You are joy," and he thanked us.

In our mission to be the best journalism and communication school, we will succeed, not by comparing ourselves to other schools, but by being who we are and becoming who we are meant to be. Whether the world be the quiet space between a teacher and student during a moment of awakening, or the excited space of a scholar’s moment of revelation, or the deeply rewarding space new graduates fill and feel on realizing their work is excellent, or the moment we learn that a collective vision has been realized – we are changing the world.

We are on the path of excellence. We have within us what it takes to be truly extraordinary. I ask that we continue on the path together.

Thank you for your consideration of my application for Dean of the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication.

Respectfully submitted,

Julianne H. Newton  
Professor of Visual Communication  
Interim Edward L. Artzt Dean

¹ Variably attributed to Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight Edwards and Anonymous.