

Benjamin McKean Williams, Ph.D.

Dr. Mattera & Search Committee:

Please accept this letter as my application for the Assistant Vice President for Student Success position at Texas State University. Throughout my career, I have intentionally works at the intersection of student engagement, belonging, leadership development, and student success outlined in the job profile. Texas State's commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for students to connect, engage, and develop both personally and professionally. I bring a track record of leveraging student engagement to elevate the student experience and support an integrated student engagement experience. I am both excited and prepared to support the various teams and institution to build a collaborative and sustainable approach to meaningful celebration and integration of co-curricular experiences in support of students' success at Texas State.

I bring more than twelve years of progressive leadership experience across public and private institutions, including roles in student involvement, student centers, orientation and transition programs, family engagement, student success, case management, and institutional leadership. Currently, I serve as Associate Dean of Students at Trinity University, where I provide leadership for Student Engagement & Development, including Fraternity & Sorority Life, Student Organizations & Activities, Leadership Development, and the Coates Student Center. In addition to overseeing these areas, I co-chair the Student Success Team and partner across the institution to support retention, persistence, and holistic student development. This combination of engagement and student success has prepared me to contribute to fostering a comprehensive engagement ecosystem that supports students throughout their educational journey.

Advancing Student Engagement as a Driver of Belonging and Success

My career has consistently focused on creating environments where students feel connected to their institution and empowered to engage meaningfully in campus life. I have led efforts that strengthen institutional belonging, increase student participation, and create pathways for leadership development and community engagement. Examples include:

- Collaborated with Athletics to develop a new model for programming leveraging collaborations across the Program Board, Student Government, Greek Council, and our Student Athlete Advisory Committee.
- Led the restructuring of Trinity University's Student Engagement & Development division to improve efficiency, clarify student support structures, and enhance the overall student experience.
- Serving as Director of Student Orientation & Family Engagement at Georgia State University, where I led orientation, family engagement, Panther Welcome, and off-campus housing efforts across six campuses and developed innovative engagement strategies that improved enrollment yield and student connection.
- Creating Panther Connect, a customized involvement pathway initiative that connected students to organizations and experiences aligned with their interests and identities identified at their time of application.
- Leading efforts at Georgia Tech and the University of Colorado Boulder that expanded student involvement opportunities, strengthened campus traditions, and increased participation among historically under-engaged student populations.

Throughout these experiences, I have seen firsthand that students who develop meaningful relationships, find communities of belonging, and engage in leadership experiences are more likely to persist and thrive.

Building a Comprehensive Co-Curricular Learning Environment

Texas State's emphasis on providing high-quality resources and experiences to support the personal, academic , and post-graduation success of students strongly aligns with my approach to student development. I believe student engagement spaces serve as living laboratories where students develop leadership competencies, communication skills, problem-solving abilities, and an understanding for their responsibility in community. Across my career, I have supervised and supported student organizations, leadership programs, student governments, programming boards, orientation leaders, fraternity and sorority communities, and the staff who bring these programs to life. Through these experiences, I have worked to intentionally connect involvement opportunities with learning outcomes, career

readiness competencies, and personal growth by:

- Partnering with colleagues across Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to implement initiatives focused on constructive dialogue, leadership development, and character education at Trinity University.
- Worked closely with leaders across Georgia State to align engagement initiatives with institutional retention goals under the Panthers POUNCE which started at Orientation and continued through their experience to guide engagement, learning, and growth.
- Led the revitalization of a spiritual life initiative to create synergy across religion and spiritual life groups at Miami University
- Restructured the Council for Graduate Life at Georgia Tech to meet the needs of current graduate students to foster engagement, belonging, and support.

These experiences have reinforced my belief that student success is strengthened when academic and co-curricular experiences are intentionally connected. It also affirmed that we need to look across the student life span for both graduate and undergraduate students to realize a fully engaged campus.

Strategic Leadership, Assessment, and Organizational Effectiveness

A hallmark of my leadership approach is using assessment, data, and strategic planning to inform decision-making and demonstrate impact. I have successfully managed budgets ranging from \$35,000 to more than \$1.1 million, overseen complex organizational structures, and led teams through periods of significant growth and change.

Examples include:

- Invested in training and skill building for professional staff across all roles to ensure individuals felt valued, appreciated, and had the skills needed to meet and exceed institutional standards.
- Redesigned orientation and transition programs at Georgia State University, resulting in significant reductions in orientation melt and increased enrollment.
- Developed new assessment and outreach strategies at Miami University that increased student engagement by more than 200% while strengthening connections between students and institutional support systems.
- Served in leadership roles that required collaboration across divisions, including Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management, Advancement, Finance, Facilities, and Student Affairs.

I am particularly energized by Texas State's commitment to strengthen assessment of engagement efforts to ensure alignment between goals, efforts, and the impact on student outcomes.

In addition, this role will require deep and thoughtful collaboration. Many of the most meaningful accomplishments in my career have been achieved through collaboration and partnerships. Whether leading university-wide student success initiatives, coordinating cross-functional response teams, developing strategic plans, or building partnerships across divisions, I have developed a reputation as a leader who brings people together around a shared vision.

Texas State University is at an exciting moment in its history with continued growth, movement to the PAC-12, and a dynamic leadership team. The opportunity to help shape a student engagement strategy that advances belonging, leadership development, persistence, and post-graduate success at one of the nation's fastest-growing public universities aligns with my personal and professional goals. I would welcome the opportunity to bring my experiences, values, and commitment to student success to the Division of Student Success.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to discussing how my experiences and leadership philosophy align with Texas State University's vision for the future.

Sincerely,

Benjamin M. Williams, Ph.D.

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Education

Doctor of Philosophy: Educational Policy Studies Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia	October 2025
Master of Science: Student Affairs in Higher Education Miami University, Oxford, Ohio	May 2015
Bachelor of Arts: Sociology Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia	May 2013

Professional Experience

Trinity University: Trinity is a four-year liberal arts university with 2,625 students. The student population is 85% residential students. 39% of students are racial minorities, 10% first generation.

Associate Dean of Students, Division of Student Affairs

1/25- Present

Report to the Associate Vice President & Dean of Students. Responsible for supervision of the Student Engagement & Development Team (Fraternity & Sorority Life, Coates Student Center, Student Organizations & Activities, and Leadership Development). Serves as a support for managing institutional crises, student challenges, and support the overall success of students. As the Co-Chair of the Student Success Team, additional responsibilities is providing case management and support coordination for students facing various challenges. Budget oversight of approximately \$850,000 in state appropriations, student fees, generated revenue, and foundation funds.

Selected Accomplishments

- Partnered with Athletics, Student Government, Student Program Board, and others to create engagement plans and increased financial support for programming at student athletic events.
- Partnered with Title IX Coordinator to revise Title IX policies and create a new intake process to enhance responsiveness to student reports.
- Collaborate with the Associate Provost for Student Success on implementation of the Constructive Dialogues Institute at Trinity University to enhance and build students capacity to have conversations on complicated and difficult topics.
- Restructured the Student Engagement & Development team to provide reclassification of staff, realign work responsibilities, and generate efficiencies in campus programming efforts.
- Lead University Student Success Team focused on supporting student retention and graduation and coordinating case management for students facing a variety of academic and social challenges.

Selected Institutional Involvement

- Co-Chair. Residential Curriculum Revision Committee
- Project Lead, Ready. Set. Rise. Strategic Plan Committee
- Member, Hazing Prevention Task Force
- Chair, Meal Plan & Housing Exemption Committee

Miami University: Miami is a four-year, doctorate granting/public liberal arts university with 19,452 students. Student population is 58% residential with 99% of students living in Oxford, 10% racial minority, 13% first generation.

Assistant Dean of Students, Division of Student Life

11/22– 12/24

Report to the Associate Dean of Students with a dotted line to the Associate Vice President & Dean of Students. Responsible for managing Informal Resolution for Title IX and Community Standards cases, coordinating bias incident response for campus, case management for off-campus students, serving as a member of the CARE Team, and overseeing all outreach initiatives on behalf of the

Office of the Dean of Students. Budget oversight of approximately \$450,000 in state appropriations, student fees, generated revenue, and foundation funds.

Selected Accomplishments

- Implemented a campus-wide capacity building program that developed students' ability to deal with conflict, build resilience, and advocate for themselves.
- Transitioned Miami University's Bias Incident Response process for our campuses to a Campus Climate Concern process that increased reporting, engagement, and stakeholder support.
- Led and developed Mental Health Incubator Fund to distribute \$150,000 from an Ohio Department of Higher Education grant to amplify mental health programming on campus.
- Developed and implemented a comprehensive outreach strategy to connect the Office of the Dean of Students to understand and respond to student needs.
- Increased engagement with students by over 200% with new strategies for engagement in both case management and general program engagement.
- Serve as liaison between the Office of the Dean of Students and Fraternity & Sorority Life and Athletics.

Selected Institutional Involvement

- Co-Chair, Bias Incident Response Team
- Member, Mental Health Task Force & Institutional Committee on Mental Health & Well-Being.
- Co-Chair, Climate & Community Action Team
- Co-Chair, CARE Team

Georgia State University: GSU is a four-year, doctorate granting R1 with five additional associate granting campuses with total University enrollment over 53,000 students. Student population is 12% residential, 76% racial minority, 21% first generation with 62% of their student population being Pell-eligible.

Donor Experience Officer, Division of University Advancement

12/21–11/22

Reported to the Executive Director of Donor Engagement & Communications, who reported to the Associate Vice President of Development. Work focused on front-line fundraising, annual giving, and engagement opportunities for a portfolio of 1,000 donors.

Selected Accomplishments

- Served as the inaugural Donor Experience Officer using innovative and traditional engagement opportunities to secure gifts for the University.
- Served as an interim Major Gifts Officer for University-Wide initiatives focused on Student Success & Student Engagement.
- Secured commitments to the University in excess of \$425,000, representing 350% of annual goal.
- Oversaw challenge gift program for Georgia State Day, generating over \$900,000 in philanthropic support.

Selected Institutional Involvement

- Member, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Council
- Executive Committee, Staff Council
- Member, University Senate

Director, Student Orientation & Family Engagement, Division of Student Success

4/19–12/21

Reported to the Assistant Vice President of Student Engagement and served as a member of the leadership team for the Vice President of Student Engagement. As the Director of Student Orientation & Family Engagement, responsible for administration of three units and their respective staff (New Student Orientation, Parent & Family Engagement, and Off- Campus Housing) across Georgia State's six campuses. Led a team of 5 full time employees, 6 graduate assistants, and 50 student employees. Budget

Management responsibility for \$1.1 million dollars in state appropriations, student fees, generated revenue, and foundation funds.

Selected Accomplishments

- Restructured orientation programs across all six campuses resulting in decreased orientation melt by two thirds resulting in enrollment of over 300 students annually.
- Implemented Panther Connect program to provide customized involvement maps to students based on high school involvement, orientation registration, and campus offerings.
- Developed and launched a sponsorship program that generated over \$60,000 annually to support programmatic goals from corporate partners.
- Grew the Parent & Family Programs area to include a comprehensive parent & family experience including the Panther Family Portal, Panther Family Association, and the Panther Family Fund to provide a holistic family engagement experience.
- Oversaw the implementation, development, and growth of Off-Campus Housing into an area with designated staff, annual housing fairs, and programs that engaged over 15,000 students annually and generated over \$50,000 annually.
- Partnered with Development & Alumni Affairs on the management, administration, and solicitation of financial support from parents and families.

Selected Institutional Involvement

- Member, Admissions Marketing Committee
- Member, Military Advisory Council
- Member, Enrollment Management Group
- Member, Georgia State Day Committee

Georgia Institute of Technology: Georgia Tech is a four-year, a comprehensive R1 institution with 26,839 students. Student population is 20% residential, 35% racial minority, 22 first generation

Associate Program Director, Student Center, Division of Campus Services

1/17 – 4/19

Reported to the Associate Director of Student Center for Programs, served as the manager for a 4,600 sq. foot performance space called Under the Couch and advised three committees of the Student Center Program Council. For Under the Couch, worked with a team of 12 student employees managed all aspects of facility maintenance, program scheduling, and general programming facilitated in the space. For Student Center Program Council, worked with three student chairs and their committee of 8-12 members to implement major campus programs ranging from Sting Break, GT Night at the Aquarium and other large events. Budget Management responsibility for \$612,000 dollars in student fees, generated revenue, and foundation funds.

Selected Accomplishments

- Led campus effort to assess graduate student needs, implement programming, and ultimately saw a 150% increase in overall graduate student participation in campus programs.
- Served as an advisor to Homecoming, Atlanta Life, and Comedy & Entertainment committees in the Student Center Program Council (SCPC) with budgets.
- Served on planning committee for the \$63 million renovation of the Student Center.
- Oversaw graduate student programming initiatives including Grad Council, Graduate Student Socials, and annual graduate student area for the annual Sting Break Festival.
- Co-Chaired the Homecoming Steering Committee consisting of campus partners from athletics, alumni, Greek life, Student Engagement, and others.
- Supervised, trained, and provided professional development for twelve student assistants and three student managers.
- Implemented a reservation process for Under the Couch daytime operations.
- Developed revenue streams to support daytime and facility improvements for Under the Couch.
- Negotiated contracts, performance agreements, and invoices with national and local agencies.

- Oversaw a team of 4 staff members to support staff development, training, hiring, and process review for 125 student employees in the Student Center.
- Built partnerships across the Division of Student Life, Campus Services, Academic Affairs, and Development to support student success, retention, and graduation.

Selected Institutional Involvement

- Member, Campus Center Renovation & Expansion Committee
- Chair, Student Employee Experience Committee
- Member & Facilitator, LGBTQIA Safe Space Training Committee
- Member, Sexual Violence Prevention Alliance

University of Colorado, Boulder A four-year, doctorate granting/public liberal arts university with 19,452 students. Student population is 27% residential, 32% racial minority, 11% first generation.

Coordinator, Center for Student Involvement

6/15-12/16

Reporting to the Assistant Director of Student Engagement, was responsible for management of Late-Night Programs, advising Senior Class Council, and serving as a liaison to over 400 student organizations to support funding requests, organization renewal, and holistic support for operations. Budget Management responsibility for \$115,000 dollars in student fees and foundation funds.

Miami University: Miami is a four-year, doctorate granting/public liberal arts university with 19,452 students. Student population is 58% residential with 99% of students living in Oxford, 10% racial minority, 13% first generation.

Graduate Director, Commuter Resource Center

7/13– 5/15

Reporting to the Associate Director of Residence Life, who reported directly to the Director of Residence Life. Responsible for administration of Commuter Resource Center including managing operations, programming, and academic advising for all first-year commuter students. Budget Management responsibility for \$35,000 dollars in residential student fees.

Selected Professional Service & Civic Engagement

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| • Board Chair, NASPA Foundation Board | 3/26-Present |
| • NASPA Board of Directors, NASPA | 3/26-Present |
| • NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Advisory Board, NASPA | 4/25- Present |
| • NASPA Texas Assistant State Director for Finance, NASPA | 3/25-Present |
| • Board of Governors, Human Rights Campaign | 9/24-Present |
| • Co-Chair, I-AM Steering Committee, ACPA/NACAS/SCUP Collaboration | 3/24-Present |
| • Board of Directors, NASPA Foundation | 3/22-Present |
| • Speakers Coordinator, Region IV-E Conference Planning Committee, NASPA | 1/24-10/24 |
| • Chair LGBTQ+ Alumni Board of Trustees, Miami University | 6/23-5/25 |
| • Co-Chair Mid-Level Administrator Steering Committee, NASPA | 11/22- 3/25 |
| • Mid-Level Liaison, Region IV-E Board, NASPA | 10/22-3/25 |
| • Development Committee, Omicron Delta Kappa | 6/22-6/24 |
| • AHEPPP Virtual Summit Planning Committee | 2021 |
| • AHEPPP Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force | 2021-2022 |
| • Program & Operations Chair, Omicron Delta Kappa ` | 2020-2021 |
| • Board of Directors, Georgia State Alumni Association | 2019-2022 |
| • Board of Directors, Georgia Equality & Equality Foundation of Georgia | 2018-2022 |
| • Board of Visitors, Georgia State College of Arts & Sciences | 2018-2020 |
| • Foundation Ambassador, NASPA | 2018-2022 |
| • Knowledge Community Publication Committee, NASPA | 2018-2021 |
| • Scholarship Review and Selection Committee, Omicron Delta Kappa | 2018-2022 |
| • 2019 Conference Engagement Committee, NASPA | 2018-2019 |
| • College Union CAS Standard Revision Work Group, CAS | 2018-2020 |

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| • Chair of Diversity and Inclusion Work Group, Omicron Delta Kappa | 2014-2016 |
| • At Large Member of Board of Directors, Omicron Delta Kappa | 2014-2016 |

Selected Presentations

- Leveraging Data to Guide Student Success Interventions. NASPA Student Success in Higher Education Conference, Austin, TX., June 2026
- Assessment 101. NASPA Student Success in Higher Education Conference, Austin, TX., June 2026
- Navigating the Policies & Politics of Support LGBTQ+ Students and Staff. NASPA Annual Conference, Kansas City, KS., March 2026
- Some Catch Title: Storytelling with Data. NASPA Annual Conference, Kansas City, KS., March 2026
- From Policy to People: Leading from the Unique Role of the Associate Dean of Students. NASPA Annual Conference, Kansas City, KS., March 2026
- Searching from the Middle: Leveraging Best Practices to Make Your Move to the Senior-Level Roles. NASPA Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA., March 2025
- “Managing the Middle: Continuing the Conversation on the Experience of Mid-Level Managers.” NASPA Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA., March 2025
- “Integrating Restorative Justice into Title IX and Conduct Work.” NASPA Region IV-East Conference, Cleveland, Oh., October 2024.
- “Belonging & Community in Work.” IPDS New Professional Seminar, Bloomington, In., July 2024
- “Failing Forward: Lessons Learned from Managing in the Middle.” Mid-Level Administrator Conference, Indianapolis, In., June 2024
- “Lessons from Losing My Mom to Cancer: The Three Lessons I Learned from Navigating Grief, a Baby Hippo Named Fiona, and my Beloved Community” NASPA Annual Conference, Seattle, Wa., Mach 2024
- “Managing the Middle” NASPA Annual Conference, Seattle, Wa., Mach 2024
- “Failing Forward in Mid-Level Roles” NASPA Annual Conference, Seattle, Wa., March 2024
- “Building Bridges through Communication” Kappa Kappa Gamma Fraternal Leadership Series, January 2022
- “Leveraging Graduate Student Funding to Foster Equity & Inclusion in Higher Education” NASPA, Baltimore, MD. March 2022
- “Kentucky Purpose First: Workshop on Student Onboarding” Complete College America, February 2022
- “Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Engagement” NODA, Orlando, FL. November 2021
- “Understanding and Exploring the Role of Student Governance” Stevens Institute of Technology, Invited Presentation, November 2020
- “Leverage Technology to Improve Student Yield and Success Through Parent Engagement” AHEPPP 2020, Virtual. November 2020
- “Leveraging Orientation Tech to Innovate Beyond Expectations.” ACPA & Advantage Design Group. Virtual Webinar. November 2020
- “When Past Becomes Present” Association of College Unions International, Indianapolis, IN. March 2019
- “A Simple Switch: Using Inclusive Language” Association of College Unions International, Indianapolis, IN. March 2019
- “What Are You Doing For Me?: Young Alumni Engagement” Georgia Alumni Professionals Workshop, Atlanta GA. May 2018
- “Job Search 2.0” Association of College Unions International, Anaheim, CA. March 2018
- “When the tough gets going, think Fiona” National Association of Campus Activities Annual Convention, Boston, MA. February 2018
- “Building a Campus Tradition: The CU’s Got Talent Story” Association of College Unions Region IV Conference, Boulder, CO. October 2016
- “Been There, Done That: Lessons for the Job Search” Association of College Unions International Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA. March 2016

Publications

- Roberts, D. & Williams, B. (2024, July 15) *Leveraging Professional Involvement: Opportunities and Challenges for Mid-Level Administrators*. NASPA Publications
- Johnson, A., Clement, K., Bohan, C., & Williams, B. (2022, May 25). *Leveraging funding and support to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in graduate education*. ACPA Developments.
- Williams, B. (2022). What will this cost, and who's paying? In C. Petree (Ed.), *College ready 2022: Expert advice for parents to simplify the college transition* (pp. 37–44). essay, Wise Action.
- Daggers, L., Pontious, M., Sterritt, K., & Williams, B. (2021). The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Engagement. *Journal of College Orientation, Transition, and Retention*, 28(2).
- Summerlot, J., & Williams, B. (2020, April 1) Managing Risk in Our Work with Student Organizations. Developments. [In CCSEP-sponsored series]
- Chaplin, S., & Williams, B. (2018, June 4th) From Zero to Sixty: Navigating Student Employee Hiring. The Bulletin
- Fitzjarrald, A., & Williams, B. (2018, February 28). Leadership in NASPA's Second Century. [In NASPA Knowledge Community Publication] 67-69
- Williams, B. (2017, May 1). Insight into the New Professional. The Bulletin.
- Williams, B. (2016, July 1). Redefining Sustainability: The Intersection of Diversity, Inclusion, and Sustainability. The Bulletin.
- Williams, B. (2015, November 1). Climate Assessments: A Tool to Change Culture in the College Union. The Bulletin, 14-20.

Teaching and Facilitation Experience

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| • FYE 1900, First Year Experience, Trinity University | 5/25-Present |
| • UNV 101, First Year Seminar, Miami University | 8/23-12/24 |
| • SOCI 1110 Intro to Social Problems, Georgia State University | 8/22-12/22 |
| • GSU 1010 First Year Seminar, Georgia State University | 7/19-12/21 |
| • GT 1000, First Year Seminar, Georgia Institute of Technology | 7/17-5/19 |
| • EDL 290: The Nature of Group Leadership, Miami University. | 7/14- 5/15 |
| • EDL 110: The University and the Student, Miami University. (Fall 2013) | 7/13-12/13 |

Honors and Awards

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| • James E. Scott Outstanding Mid-Level Student Affairs Award, NASPA Region III | 6/25 |
| • Brian Breittholz Outstanding Fraternity Advisor of the Year, Miami University | 5/25 |
| • Rising Star Award- Federal Club, Human Rights Campaign | 4/25 |
| • LGBTQ+ Inclusion Award, Miami University Center for Student Diversity & Inclusion | 5/24 |
| • Spirit of Student Life Award, Division of Student Life at Miami University | 5/24 |
| • Community Builder Award, Miami University Armstrong Student Center | 4/24 |
| • Young Philanthropist of the Year, Miami University Foundation | 11/23 |
| • 18 of the Last 9 Award, Miami University | 9/23 |
| • OUTstanding LGBTQ Alumni, Georgia State University | 4/22 |
| • Friends of the LGBTQIA Resource Center Award, Georgia Institute of Technology | 4/19 |
| • 40 Under 40 Class of 2018, Georgia State University | 3/18 |
| • Presidential Award for Distinguished Service, ACUI | 4/15 |