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September 18, 2010

Dear Ms. Channel,

Thank you for contacting me about the position of President and Chief Executive Office of Knowledge Inc. I appreciate the opportunity to provide the Search Committee with information about my career to date and the work I have done to prepare me for this position.

When working with regions across North Carolina, I find community constituents are genuinely supportive of education. Parents want the best for their child, educators are committed to student growth, leaders understand the value of knowledgeable, engaged citizens, and businesses and legislators realize education is essentially economic development. Despite this tacit support, actors often fall back on their own school experiences when considering opportunities for improving outcomes, rejecting innovation and limiting the potential of schools to better serve the community's needs. This is understandable, of course, because there is no greater resource than our children, so taking risks with their education can be disconcerting. It is only in partnership, with a shared vision well communicated, compelling evidence, aligned goals, and effective engagement of individuals across the sectors, that we are able to implement change. With tenacity and profound respect for local circumstances, I have established lasting models for partnership, positioning the community and the organizations I work with to accomplish together infinitely more than either could alone, raising the profile of the schools and teachers at a time when policy and politics seem to constantly diminish them.

With advances in technology in the 1990s and 2000s, insight and evidence from learning sciences and the accelerated pace of learning for success in college and career, schools realize they now must change, but bureaucratic, outdated systems, antiquated teacher development programs and other hurdles constrain their ability to transform. They need support and effective collaboration to transcend these challenges and develop the learning ecosystem their community deserves. The Knowledge Inc approach to transformation, including personalized competency-based learning and a firm commitment to engaged communities, collective impact, and cross-sector collaboration, fits well with my leadership style and approach to education. The commitment to access and equity aligns with the open content work I have been doing in North Carolina K20 education since the late 1990's, as well as the models implemented in my past two positions, extending access to rigorous content and excellent faculty in hard-to-staff disciplines. Knowledge Inc will expand to substantively impact schools across the nation. I want to lead this charge.

Commented [A1]: spelling

Commented [A2]: Officer

Commented [A3]: lowercase

Commented [A4]: lowercase

Commented [A5]: change to "children"

Commented [A6]: Delete, insert semicolon

Commented [A7]: Delete, insert semicolon

Commented [A8]: Delete comma and conjunction, insert semicolon

Commented [A9]: em-dash needed

Commented [A10]: word choice

Commented [A11]: I need clarification. It feels as though the first half of the sentence and the second half disagree with each other, when I think there is actually supposed to be a cause and effect relationship happening. Maybe there needs to be an "outcomes; in turn, rejecting innovation..." or the sentence needs to be reworded altogether.

Commented [A12]: omit

Commented [A13]: move "well communicated" to be before "shared vision"

"well communicated, shared vision"

Commented [A14]: I think this highlighted portion can be deleted. It would simplify the sentence structure. Plus, so ... [1]

Commented [A15]: This may be a little too verbose, ... [2]

Commented [A16]: Delete comma, insert "that have"

Commented [A17]: Change to "positioned"

Commented [A18]: Insert "more"

Commented [A19]: delete

Commented [A20]: delete, insert period

Commented [A21]: Make this its own sentence and p ... [3]

Commented [A22]: This sentence has a confusing str ... [4]

Commented [A23]: insert comma

Commented [A24]: insert comma

Commented [A25]: This sentence could benefit from ... [5]

Commented [A26]: Can you clarify who "they" is? C ... [6]

Commented [A27]: delete comma, insert em-dash

Commented [A28]: delete comma, insert em-dash

Commented [A29]: Inconsistent with the styling of o ... [7]

Commented [A30]: Change to "which extend"

Commented [A31]: word choice

As President and C.E.O., I would have an opportunity to position KnowledgeInc. to more broadly facilitate the necessary shift in focus to the learner and transform the structure of learning environments. Experiential and personalized digital learning open up opportunities for full, effective participation of every learner and also allow for more effective utilization of the system's greatest resource – our teachers. From my experience, I see teaching as a vocation and a teacher as a caring, motivated leader whose spirit is fed by the student successes they facilitate in their classroom. Based upon research I've done on teacher satisfaction and retention, providing these skilled professionals with the tools and space to implement competency-based personalized learning will not only positively impact student outcomes, but will make teaching more rewarding. The potential for transformation of schools is incredible.

My experience building capacity in organizations I have led has required insight into my organization's unique talent and an entrepreneurial approach uncommon in the public sector. At Web Academy, where I worked as Vice President from 2000-2006, the state allocation was enhanced through strategic partnerships, resulting in grant, subcontract and contract work. Major projects like the UNC Online portal and 2+2 Course Development for the UNC System office, content and course development for the Department of Public Instruction, and the Teacher Working Conditions (now TELLs) for New Teacher Center (to name some of the largest), built capacity to do more for less for North Carolina schools and educators. Add to that the revenue-positive professional development program developed in partnership with providers statewide.

Similarly, at the North Carolina School of the Arts, where I worked from 2012 until 2019, the state allocation for extended programs was inadequate and, as outreach and distance education pulled from the residential program, unsustainable. In the the 7 years I have been in this position I have worked to make the division self-supporting, securing a permanent recurring allocation from the state legislature, a one-time allocation to upgrade videoconferencing broadcast studios and our entire campus network infrastructure, enrollment growth funding for growing programs, and permission to charge for services beyond the school's scope of service to North Carolina, effectively allowing us to be entrepreneurial in summer, distance and teacher professional development programs. My division is now not only self-supporting, but has grown significantly, with the online program serving 34 times the number of admitted students and double the course offerings in interactive video conferencing. With increased, dedicated resources and the ability to generate revenue to grow capacity, we are finally able to contribute back to the school, increasing opportunities for all students regardless of the program.

As is evident in the work I've done, this is important to me. I am passionate about equity of access to high-quality personalized learning for every student, regardless of socioeconomic background. I've devoted my career to fostering talent and opening opportunities that allow others to reach their highest potential. In my current position I have leveraged what limited opportunity there has been to participate in work at the

Commented [A32]: Change to CEO, there are no other acronyms/initialisms that have periods following each letter

Commented [A33]: Different word. You used "position" similarly in the second paragraph

Commented [A34]: Add space between "Knowledge" and "Inc"

Commented [MC35]: Remove period, inconsistent style

Commented [A36]: Delete and change to "opens"

Commented [A37]: Delete and change to "from"

Commented [A38]: Delete en-dash, insert colon

Commented [A39]: Make a separate sentence for more clarity. "Further, this would allow for more effective utilization of the system's greatest resource: our teachers."

Commented [A40]: delete

Commented [A41]: delete

Commented [A42]: make plural

"teachers as caring, motivated leaders whose spirits are fed" ... [8]

Commented [A43]: This word is already used two ... [9]

Commented [A44]: Delete, hyphen unnecessary

Commented [A45]: In what way? This last sentence ... [10]

Commented [A46]: I need clarification in this sentence ... [11]

Commented [A47]: This doesn't need to be italicized.

Commented [A48]: Delete hyphen and add the word 'to'

Commented [A49]: Insert comma (serial comma) to ... [12]

Commented [A50]: Insert comma

Commented [A51]: Delete extra space

Commented [A52]: There is already so much information ... [13]

Commented [A53]: I might need some clarification ... [14]

Commented [A54]: Try a different transition, this one ... [15]

Commented [A55]: This sentence would read better ... [16]

Commented [A56]: Delete comma, insert em-dash

Commented [A57]: delete

Commented [A58]: inconsistent with previous number ... [17]

Commented [A59]: delete extra space

Commented [A60]: insert comma

Commented [A61]: This font needs to be changed to ... [18]

Commented [A62]: This could be written out as "the" ... [19]

Commented [A63]: Not consistent with the way ... [20]

Commented [A64]: Add apostrophe between "I" and "v"

national level¹, notably as the UNC System lead for *100Kin10*, providing leadership to mission-aligned organizations addressing critical issues in STEM education, particularly for rural teachers.

While the impact of this work is great, my role does not often extend my reach beyond the state. As President and Chief Executive Officer of Knowledge Inc, I will continue to work to advocate for teachers and students in policy and practice, scaling to make a much larger contribution to our nation's future. Additionally, I will have the opportunity to leverage strong partnerships and foster new ones, build on sound financial practices while growing annual revenue, and best of all, to work alongside a team committed to delivering what is needed for each student to thrive. With years of experience in content development, designing innovating practice, influencing policy in digital and distance learning, strategic leadership and organizational collaboration, I am well positioned to lead Knowledge Inc to reach the goals that ensure each student has access to meaningful personalized learning.

Sincerely



Melissa Gale, Ph.D.

Commented [A65]: Delete extra space

Commented [A66]: This does not need to be italicized.

Commented [A67]: Once again, this is a run-on sentence and the author should just devote a whole separate sentence about 100Kin10

Commented [A68]: Different word. "Leverage" was used in the paragraph above

Commented [A69]: Insert comma

Commented [A70]: This sentence would benefit from parallel structure to make the long sentence more easily readable

Commented [A71]: Insert comma

Commented [A72]: Different word; "positioned" has been used several times in similar ways throughout the letter

Commented [A73]: Try something less passive. "I have the necessary insight and skills to lead"

Commented [A74]: Insert comma

Commented [A75]: Insert comma

Page 1: [1] Commented [A14] Author

I think this highlighted portion can be deleted. It would simplify the sentence structure. Plus, some of what is highlighted is synonymous with the sentiment expressed in other areas of the sentence. For example, “aligned goals” is synonymous with a “shared vision.” Also, I think “compelling evidence” is implied as something necessary to a “well communicated” vision.

The sentence would become:

“It is only in partnership, with a well communicated, shared vision and effective engagement of individuals across the sectors, that we are able to implement change.”

Page 1: [2] Commented [A15] Author

This may be a little too verbose, try omitting

Page 1: [3] Commented [A21] Author

Make this its own sentence and provide a direct explanation as to how these partnership models raise the profile of schools and teachers

Page 1: [4] Commented [A22] Author

This sentence has a confusing structure and verbose language, making it hard to understand. The changes I made simplifies the language and structure, so that it is easier to read and understand.

Sentence with said changes:

“With respect for local circumstances, I have established lasting models for partnerships that have positioned the communities and organizations I work with to accomplish more together than either could alone.”

Page 1: [5] Commented [A25] Author

This sentence could benefit from being split into two sentences. I think a natural place to do so is, “but bureaucratic, outdated systems...”

Page 1: [6] Commented [A26] Author

Can you clarify who “they” is? Could be schools, teacher development programs, etc.

Page 1: [7] Commented [A29] Author

Inconsistent with the styling of other dates in paragraph

Page 2: [8] Commented [A42] Author

make plural

“teachers as caring, motivated leaders whose spirits are fed”

Page 2: [9] Commented [A43] Author

This word is already used two sentences prior, so find and replace “facilitate” with a synonym

Page 2: [10] Commented [A45] Author

In what way? This last sentence needs to be more specific and relate back to the transformative powers of integrating programs and resources that will empower teachers

Page 2: [11] Commented [A46] Author

I need clarification in this sentence. I am not sure what “building capacity in organizations” entails.

Page 2: [12] Commented [A49] Author

Insert comma (serial comma) to help with clarity

Page 2: [13] Commented [A52] Author

There is already so much information in this sentence, I don't know if this parenthetical is necessary.

Page 2: [14] Commented [A53] Author

I might need some clarification here. By "less" are you referring to working within a tight budget or building programs in an economically resourceful way?

Page 2: [15] Commented [A54] Author

Try a different transition, this one is a little awkward

Page 2: [16] Commented [A55] Author

This sentence would read better if the comma was replaced with an em-dash here and after the word "program"

Page 2: [17] Commented [A58] Author

inconsistent with previous number styling choices, spell out "seven"

Page 2: [18] Commented [A61] Author

This font needs to be changed to be consistent with the rest of the text. This font is Times New Roman, but the rest of the text is in Book Antiqua. I also think that this highlighted portion should be turned into a separate sentence. There are already a ton of long, complicated sentences.

Page 2: [19] Commented [A62] Author

This could be written out as "thirty-four"

Page 2: [20] Commented [A63] Author

Not consistent with the way videoconferencing was written before