

Dr. Erin H. Fouberg

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Dear President LaFave, Dean Bockorny, Dean Blackburn, and Members of the Search Committee,

Northern State University stands at a moment of real opportunity. With strong presidential leadership, dedicated faculty and staff, and a clear commitment to student success, Northern has momentum and is well positioned to deepen its impact across the region and the state.

The next Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs must be a leader who can leverage these strengths to support faculty excellence, strengthen student success, and ensure our academic enterprise continues to evolve in ways that serve students, the region, and the state. It is with deep commitment to Northern's mission and confidence in our future that I submit my application for the position of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

My leadership philosophy is grounded in clarity of purpose, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Throughout my career at Northern, I have focused on turning high-potential ideas into high-performing programs while keeping student learning and opportunity at the center.

I have led new program development, strengthened graduate education, supported faculty innovation, and built partnerships that connect Northern to workforce and community needs. **These experiences prepare me to provide steady, strategic leadership for Academic Affairs.**

As Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Director of Graduate Studies, I have guided curriculum development, supported accreditation work, and aligned academic initiatives with institutional priorities. In recent years, we have launched multiple new degree programs, expanded graduate enrollment, and strengthened processes that better support faculty and students.

Earlier in my career, as Director of the Honors Program, I worked across campus to grow undergraduate research, build recruitment strategies, and create a living-learning community that improved both retention and engagement. Across these roles, my focus has remained consistent: build trust, empower and connect colleagues, and create the conditions for academic excellence.

A central responsibility of the provost is to cultivate a culture where faculty can thrive. I believe deeply in shared governance, transparent communication, and thoughtful decisions

grounded in data and mission. My approach is to listen carefully, connect people around shared goals, and support innovation while maintaining rigorous academic standards. **In my current role as Interim Provost, I work closely with deans, academic directors, and faculty to strengthen collaboration and reinforce a culture of mutual respect and accountability.**

Higher education is evolving quickly, and regional universities like Northern are uniquely positioned to lead through innovation grounded in exceptional teaching.

We must expand access through flexible delivery, align programs with workforce needs, and remain rooted in the critical thinking cultivated through the liberal arts. Northern's strengths in personalized education, community engagement, and e-learning provide a powerful foundation. As provost, I will continue to strengthen academic quality, invest in faculty development, and ensure our programs remain relevant, rigorous, and mission driven.

Academic Affairs also encompasses a broad ecosystem of units that shape the Northern Experience beyond the classroom. These areas provide the systems, support, and infrastructure that make learning accessible and coherent for students. My approach is to connect the dots across people, processes, and information so that policies and supports work together seamlessly. When these areas align around a shared vision, we reduce barriers, improve decision making, and create a more integrated experience for students and faculty.

As higher education enters an era increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, the role of the provost is to lead with both imagination and discernment. **We can embrace AI as a tool that expands access and personalizes learning while remaining anchored in the enduring strengths of the liberal arts that cultivate curiosity, ethical reasoning, communication, and human connection.** Through a shared commitment to the Northern Experience, we can create an integrated learning environment that prepares students to navigate complexity with confidence and purpose.

An effective provost must also be deeply connected to the community, the state, and the broader higher education system. My service on the Aberdeen City Council and on regional nonprofit and civic boards has strengthened my ability to build partnerships and understand the broader context shaping our students' lives.

Equally important, my ongoing collaboration with Board of Regents staff, relationships with Regents, and work with provost colleagues across the system position me to advance Northern's priorities effectively. These connections allow me to bring community insight into academic planning and to represent Northern as a trusted and collaborative partner across the state.

Northern is a place where relationships matter. I have built my career here by working alongside faculty, staff, students, and community partners to move ideas forward. I bring institutional

knowledge, a deep commitment to Northern's future, and the energy and optimism needed to guide Academic Affairs in a time of opportunity and change.

Thank you for your consideration of my application and for your service to Northern. I would be honored to serve Northern as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and to work with colleagues across campus to advance academic excellence and student success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erin H. Fouberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Erin H. Fouberg