

October 21, 2024

Brent Plisch
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Vice Chancellor Lynch and Search and Screen Committee Members,

I enthusiastically submit this letter and my resume in hopes of becoming the next Chief of Police/Associate Vice Chancellor for the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Having served the University of Wisconsin-Madison for nearly twenty years, I look forward to continuing to face the challenges and opportunities to engage in this exceptional leadership opportunity. I believe I am uniquely suited to work in partnership with the Department, the UW-Madison campus, and the greater Madison community to sustain and improve the safety and well-being of our campus community. I would be honored to lead the amazing employees of the Department in our shared mission, with intentionality in the areas of engagement, listening, and innovation. As a team I am confident we can create an environment that welcomes community contributions to and participation with the Department as partners in public safety.

Throughout my twenty years of service at UW-Madison, I have been able to practice, experience, or lead nearly all facets of public safety provided by the Department. I am well situated to lead the Department into the future because of this wide breadth of experience. I have learned about and grown with this organization. I have a strong understanding and experience in the technical aspects of public safety, the needs of UW-Madison Police Department employees, the University administration's priorities, and community expectations.

I have been a highly engaged employee at the UW-Madison Police Department since starting as a police officer in 2005. I have held critical roles such as field trainer, K9 handler, community liaison, and have served at every level of leadership within the organization since 2010, serving in every major division of the organization. In these positions, I have engaged in self-driven projects including the creation of new units within the Department, the creation of new policies and procedures, and the use of research and data-driven decision-making to ensure the Department is best serving the community. Some of these projects have included multi-disciplinary efforts such as the threat assessment and behavior intervention teams, implementation of amnesty through responsible action guidelines, community restorative court introduction, conception of UW-Madison's first public safety phone application, and planning for and executing major incidents in a wide variety of roles from a front-line employee to incident commander. These assignments required partnerships with stakeholders within UW-Madison, with members of the Madison community, and with local, state, and federal partners.

Since February of 2024, I have been able to lead the UW-Madison Police Department in the role of interim chief. This time has been vital to the stability, reframing, and overall wellness of the organization. I have not wavered in my commitment to the community, the UW-Madison Police Department, and I have integrated with the current administration to ensure public safety priorities are met or exceeded. During this time, I created three foundational building blocks for our team, which include a commitment to listening to employees and the community, approaching challenging times

with patience and grace, and delivering high-quality service to our community. From this, our leadership team built four priority areas including relationship building, retention and recruitment of employees, evaluation and forward progress of our strategic plan, and evaluation of our resource allocation. I'm very proud of the work done by the team to advance these goals in a significant way in just eight months.

Internal to the UW-Madison Police Department, as interim chief, I have created spaces for feedback including department-wide listening sessions, monthly department meetings, and pulse surveys. These opportunities have allowed employees at all levels and in all disciplines to have input on the way forward for the Department. These meetings and several other department leadership engagements resulted in the creation of a new values system, a vision statement, and a mission focused on public safety and caring for employees. In conjunction with the leadership team, we have worked to develop meeting structures and decision-making practices to ensure we are efficient and effective. I have also made leadership development a priority for all levels of leaders throughout the Department. I believe leaders throughout the organization are more empowered to make decisions and act as leaders than they were previously. Together, we have made meaningful changes to policies, operational issues, and our visibility in community spaces.

During my time as interim chief, I have been able to expand my opportunities to connect with a wide variety of groups and individuals to advance relationships within our community. I have empowered other leaders in the Department to extend themselves in this space as well. These relationships have included connecting with various governance groups, formal and informal leaders within our community, students and student groups, and a wide variety of Madison-based community groups. I have also been committed to meeting and engaging with fellow public safety professionals through organizations including the International Association of Chiefs of Police, International Campus Law Enforcement Accreditation Association, Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association & Wisconsin Police Executive Group, Big 10 Chiefs and Director's group, and many others. Connecting with these groups is a vital part of the UW-Madison Police Department mission and helps to bridge the gaps that exist between the profession of law enforcement and the community we serve. Likewise, building connections and understanding allows our team to develop new and innovative ways of providing service to the community.

Throughout my career at UW-Madison, including my time as interim chief, I have experienced times of increased tension between the community and the police. These incidents have ranged from local and state-level crises that have not focused directly on police to national movements that have called for the defunding and abolishment of police. During these times, I have engaged with members of the community, elected officials, and others to listen to and understand a wide variety of perspectives about the public's expectations of the UW-Madison Police Department. I have helped to develop the framework and programs to move police and community relationships forward and continue to do this work through restructuring the Police Advisory Council to ensure community voices are part of the decision-making process at the UW-Madison Police Department.

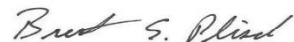
As interim chief of police, I have engaged with university administrators, community members, elected officials, and external law enforcement partners to achieve public safety goals. I have provided counsel on legal options available as well as alternate plans of action focused on more desirable outcomes.

Some of these discussions and decisions were made under stressful, time-sensitive, and potentially dangerous conditions.

I believe in continued education, career development, and learning at all levels in public safety organizations. As such, I am currently in my second year of a master's degree program in public administration. Through this program, I have honed my skills in research, analysis of data, and presentation of related materials. This work and the learned approaches have been valuable in discussions related to the UW-Madison Police Department's budget and personnel needs where I have been able to advocate for market-based funding increases, led efforts and empowered leaders to create programs related to the advancement of technology resources, and have worked with the leadership team to develop a resource priority list needed for Department growth. While obtaining a master's degree is a personal goal, I am already experiencing the benefits in a professional setting and the knowledge, skills, and abilities learned are setting the UW-Madison Police Department on a course in the right direction.

The UW-Madison Police Department is truly a special place to work and develop a career in public safety. I have been honored to serve this community and am hopeful you find my knowledge of UW-Madison, the UW-Madison Police Department, and the greater Madison community as strengths that will benefit our community members and UW-Madison Police Department employees. I look forward to future steps in this process and can provide additional information and examples of my leadership skills and public safety knowledge that will benefit the UWPD and its stakeholders for years to come. I look forward to the opportunity to lead this amazing organization with the Wisconsin Idea in mind, exploring new methods of community connection, progressive efforts in transparency, and creating a model for other agencies to emulate should I be selected as the next Chief of Police/Associate Vice Chancellor.

On Wisconsin!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Brent E. Plisch".

Brent E. Plisch