



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TENNESSEE  
KNOXVILLE

October 24, 2016

Dr. Jon Shefner  
Department of Sociology  
Search Committee Chair for Geography

Dear Dr. Shefner and Search Committee Members:

Please accept this letter as an application for the open Department Head position within Geography. I am interested in this position as a result of my experience within the department and also, wanting to be a part of its long-term goals and success. Outlined below are a few ways in which my background aligns with the position, in terms of qualifications and experience:

- I currently serve as the department's Associate Head. Working with Dr. Alderman, even during the past few months, has provided valuable experience regarding the department's operations.
- I was the director of our undergraduate program from 2011 to 2016. In addition to directing the overall curricular operations of our department, I led the recent retooling of our undergraduate major.
- Over the past decade, I have served on numerous committees across the College and University, including those related to curricular matters. In addition to providing useful experience on operations across UT, these service positions enabled the establishment of working relationships with administrators and faculty members from other departments.

While there are (and will be) numerous goals, concerns, and tasks for the department, listed below are just two ways in which I hope to advance Geography at UT:

- Fine-tuning and growing the Geospatial, Human, and Physical groups within the Department. Many departments across the world are specializing in particular research tracks or emphases. It will be important for us to have this discussion, especially in terms of how we 'market' the department and allocate future resources.
- Continue to grow the undergraduate program. The establishment of concentrations was a critical first step. Moving forward, it is important to establish a growth trajectory for the major, even in light of the lack of emphasis on the subject in K-12 programs.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. I look forward to potentially meeting with the committee.

Sincerely,

Ronald V. Kalafsky

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