

Alex Kohnen

I am writing in reference on my interest and qualifications for the position Associate Vice Chancellor of Facilities Planning and Management. I have spent the last five years at Arizona State University with four of them as the Assistant Vice President for Facilities Management and Operations and most recently as the Interim Vice President for Facilities Development and Management. Prior to that, I spent twenty years as a Civil Engineer Corps Officer managing shore infrastructure for the United States Navy. Since that time, I have discovered that I have a passion for working in higher education. The ability to support students, staff, and research provides a sense of purpose that I do not believe can be found the private sector. While I love Arizona State University and the people who work here, the opportunity to provide strategic vision and leadership to a team of over 1000 professionals at a university with the world class reputation and resources that the University of Wisconsin-Madison possesses would be the chance of a lifetime.

I have had a wide variety of experiences in program management, municipal partnerships, public private ventures, planning and budgeting, environmental compliance, utilities management, strategic planning, and customer service. I have managed large capital programs for the Navy to include new base called the Coastal Campus Program, resourcing the Joint Strike Fighter Construction Program, partnered with a private developer for in kind consideration in the form of a \$100+M office building for a ground lease at the Broadway Redevelopment Project, and a host of other programs throughout California and the Southwestern United States. I believe my greatest value to a University is my ability to create innovative solutions to problems that enhance value while reducing costs. When faced with the need to reduce energy consumption in California, I created a steam decentralization project that had a five year payback on a \$40M construction project in the form of utility savings. Sensing an opportunity, I worked with the contractor to create a proposal that would have utilized the abandoned cogeneration plants as electrical peaker plants for grid resiliency and could have provided the Naval Base independent back up power at the distribution level in the case of an emergency. At ASU when asked to merge four campuses into a single facility organization, I created a matrix management structure that required no additional personnel, yet standardized processes and leadership across the University system. This leadership structure with its focus on the individual and workforce development significantly reduced employee turnover, enhance morale, and has resulted in a 200% increase in workforce productivity over the last two years.

While my understanding of maintenance and operations is the area I have spent the largest part of my career, I possess a unique set of skills and experiences that I think make me the ideal candidate for this position. I have advanced degrees in engineering and business administration that allows me to evaluate issues from both a technical and financial perspective. I am currently working on a PhD in Sustainability, giving me an entirely new perspective on the long term effects of design choices. I was a certified contracting officer with the federal government, which trained me in all aspects of contract management and negotiations. I have served on intergovernmental teams, giving me the opportunity to understand the dynamics of local and state regulations, politics, and issues. I developed and implemented strategic plans at all levels of an organization and dealt with the difficulties of change management. I have spent time as an owner and understand the demands and challenges customers face when facilities fail to meet their needs and expectations. I believe this unique combination of education and experience will allow me to deliver the University of Wisconsin-Madison the quality capital projects and facilities support it deserves.