

320 Park Lane  
West Lafayette, Indiana 47906

August 18, 2015

School Board of Trustees  
West Lafayette Community School Corporation  
1130 N. Salisbury St.  
West Lafayette, Indiana 47906

Dear School Board,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to apply for the current opening on the West Lafayette School Board. I am a Professor of English at Purdue, and my family and I have lived in West Lafayette for eleven years. My children, Emily (15) and Collin (13), are students at the West Lafayette Jr./Sr. High, and they attended Cumberland and Happy Hollow schools. I have been interested in serving on the school board for some time, and I now have the ability to make this kind of important commitment. My background and experience as an educator and civic leader would make me a solid addition to this important body.

The West Lafayette schools, like many Indiana schools, face numerous challenges in the near future. The recent economic recession led to frozen education budgets and financial cuts at the state level. As a result, our school facilities need repair or replacement and our teachers have lost ground economically. Our schools are also experiencing accelerating faculty turnover as teachers from the baby boom generation continue to retire. Meanwhile, some of our younger and promising teachers have opted to leave for better opportunities in other states. Overall, West Side schools have weathered the recession, but as the economy recovers, many important decisions face the school board about how to move forward.

My experience would allow me to make several important contributions to the board:

**Background in STEM Communication**—At Purdue, I am a nationally recognized expert in written and oral communication, especially in scientific, medical, technical, and environmental fields. As West Side continues to strengthen its preparation of students for STEM fields, I can offer guidance with curricular matters and be an advisor with hiring in these areas.

**Familiarity with Assessment**—I regularly teach graduate courses on assessment at Purdue. Assessment at the K-12 levels is similar to college assessment, so I could offer an informed understanding of the best ways to implement and manage assessment locally and at the state level.

**Expertise with Facilities**—As a University Senator for six years, including two as committee chair, I have served on Purdue's University Resources and Policies Committee, which oversees facilities at Purdue. As a result, I have a solid

understanding of issues involving buildings, energy usage, renovation, and campus planning in an educational setting.

**Civic Leadership**—I am interested in conservation issues. I was one of the founding members of the West Lafayette Go Greener Commission, and I have been a member of numerous committees involved with improving health and sustainability at Purdue and in the community.

**Experience with Extracurricular Activities**—Sports, music, arts, and other extracurricular activities are important at West Side, and my background as a coach and theater supporter would allow me to make informed decisions about personnel and facilities. I have been a long-time coach for baseball, soccer, and basketball.

**Flexible Schedule**—I am a busy person, but my position as a professor at Purdue gives give me the time flexibility to attend board meetings and complete any studies or tasks assigned to me.

**Non-Partisan Approach**—Occasionally, people see the school board as a place to push their social or political agendas. Fortunately, the West Lafayette school board has successfully steered away from those kinds of controversies. If appointed, I would continue along that pragmatic, moderate path. My only interest is to make informed decisions that will help the children and teachers of West Lafayette succeed and thrive.

As the economy strengthens, I believe we will have some exciting new opportunities to renew and strengthen our school district. We have much to be proud of here in West Lafayette, but we need to always be looking over the horizon if we want to stay at the forefront of education in Indiana. I have the experience and vision to help the school board continue to support this dynamic and successful school district.

Thank you again for giving me this opportunity to apply for this vacancy. I can be reached at 765-430-7440 or at [rjohnso@purdue.edu](mailto:rjohnso@purdue.edu).

Sincerely,



Richard D. Johnson

# **RICHARD D. JOHNSON**

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## **OFFICE ADDRESS**

Department of English  
Purdue University  
500 Oval Drive  
428 Heavilon Hall  
West Lafayette, Indiana 47907-2038

## **HOME ADDRESS**

320 Park Lane  
West Lafayette, Indiana 47906  
765-430-7440

## **ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

**Professor of Rhetoric and Composition**, Fall 2004 to Present  
Purdue University, Department of English, West Lafayette, Indiana

**Professor of Language and Rhetoric**, Fall 1995 to Summer 2004  
University of New Mexico, Department of English Language and Literature,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Faculty, Anderson Schools of Management**, Summer 1998 to Spring 2004  
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Executive MBA Program

## **NON-ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

**President**, 2006 to Present  
Phronesis, Inc., West Lafayette, Indiana

**Communications Consultant**, 1996 to 2006

**Grant Development Director**, 1992 to 1994  
Octagon Center for the Arts, Ames, Iowa

**Associate Editor and Writer**, 1990 to 1992  
Cahners Publishing, Des Plaines, Illinois, *Electronic Packaging & Production Magazine*

## **ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE**

**Director of the Purdue Writing Lab and Purdue OWL**, Summer 2014 to Summer 2015  
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

**Director of Introductory Composition**, Summer 2005 to August 2008  
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

**Director of Rhetoric and Writing Program**, Spring 2002 to Summer 2004  
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Director of Professional Writing and Internships**, Fall 1997 to Spring 2002  
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico

## **FELLOWSHIPS**

**Purdue Discovery Park Faculty Research Fellow**, 2012 to 2013  
Project: "Building a Curriculum in Medical, Scientific, and Environmental Leadership."

## **EDUCATIONAL HISTORY**

**Doctor of Philosophy**, Rhetoric and Professional Communication, 1995  
Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa  
Major:

**Master of Arts**, Business and Technical Communication, 1990  
Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa

**Bachelor of Science**, English, 1988  
Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa

## **AWARDS AND SERVICE**

### **AWARDS FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH**

2009 Iowa State University Distinguished Alumni Award

2008 ATTW Fellow (one Fellow chosen each year).

Winner of the Society for Technical Communication's 2001 Frank R. Smith Outstanding Journal Article Award.

Winner of 1998 NCTE Excellence Award for Best Article in "Historical Research or Textual Studies in Technical or Scientific Communication."

Keleher Award For Excellence in Undergraduate Education, 1998

### **UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

University President's Budget and Affordability Committee, 2013-present

Chair, College of Liberal Arts Senate Nominations and Elections Committee, 2014-2015

Chair and Vice Chair, University Resources Policy Committee (Senate Subcommittee), 2008-2010, 2011-2014, 2015-present

Senator, Purdue University Senate, 2007-2010, 2011-2014, 2015-present

Capital Coordination Committee, Purdue University Administration, 2009-2014

Architecture and Landscape Design Committee, 2007-2009

Senator, College of Liberal Arts, 2006-2007, 2011, 2014-2015

Faculty Advisor, Purdue Sierra Club Student Coalition, 2011-present

Faculty Advisor, Purdue Lutheran Ministry, 2005-2007

Member, College of Liberal Arts International Studies Committee, 2005-2009

Member, Steering Committee, Purdue Bioinformatics Research Group, 2005-2006

Grant Proposal Writing Workshops, College of Liberal Arts at Purdue, UNM University Hospital and UNM Office of Research Services, 1999-2004

UNM University Curriculum Committee, A&S Representative, 1997-1998

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Founding Commissioner, Go Greener Commission, West Lafayette, Indiana, 2010-2013

Co-Founder, Cancer, Culture, and Community, Interdisciplinary Program, 2006-present

President, Sierra Club, Albuquerque Chapter, New Mexico