



Feb. 27, 2023

Professor and Assistant Director and State Program Leader for Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Community Economic Development

Dear Search Committee

I am writing to express my interest in serving the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service as the Assistant Director and State Program Leader for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Community Economic Development. I believe that I have the experience and qualification for this position and ask that you carefully consider my application.

I have served as the Oklahoma Soil and Water Conservation/Management Extension specialist since May of 2008. During this time, I have developed a program that serves Oklahoma by providing research based information to assist natural resource managers in achieving their goals of improving stewardship while maintaining or improving economic viability of their systems. Early in my career I was met with a tremendous collaborative effort to advance the adoption of no-till cropping systems. When I started at OSU the No-till Oklahoma extension program was well underway and I worked hard to figure out how I could contribute to the success of this program that included collaborations with county, area, and state extension personnel as well as county, state and federal conservation personnel, and producers. Participation in this successful program solidified my belief that my goals as a conservation extension specialist can only be achieved through collaboration with experts in all aspect of the system. I also learned that effective positive change in our production systems takes time and that due to the diversity of production in Oklahoma we need strong local understanding of production systems and barriers to adoption of new technology and management strategies. This is why I think the Cooperative Extension Service is so valuable to Oklahoma, and why I have tried to develop relationships with State, Area, and County Extension personnel to achieve my program goals.

Early in my career I also started working on irrigation management strategies in the Panhandle of Oklahoma. At the time there was no work being done specifically to address irrigation water use by major crops in the region. It took many years and much investment from DASNR to build a very well recognized irrigation research and extension program where we now have a team of OSU extension and research specialist sufficient to not only address the needs of the panhandle but to better served all of Oklahoma's irrigated producers. Furthermore, the Ogallala is a resource that spans 8 states. During the last 10 years I have had the pleasure of working with specialist from most of these states to build a regional effort to address the tremendous challenges in this region.

I have served as the co-coordinator for the Oklahoma Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Professional Development Program (OKSARE-PDP) since 2011. This program has historically been a collaboration with Langston University which we are now trying to expand to support the natural resource conservation extension education efforts of the College of the Muscogee Nation. Much of the OKSARE-PDP is devoted to providing training opportunities to county and area extension professionals as well as non-governmental organization personnel. It has been a great opportunity to learn more about the smaller niche market production systems in Oklahoma as well as advance the principles of sustainable agriculture throughout all of our production systems from horticultural crops, agronomic crops, and animal production. I think OKSARE has had a significant positive impact on Oklahoma agriculture in numerous ways and if given the opportunity to interview for the Assistant Director and State Program Leader position I will share specific examples.

In closing, I very much enjoy my current position as an extension specialist, its responsibilities to serve agriculture, the opportunities I have to educate the next generation of agricultural professionals as graduate and undergraduate students, and conduct research to support my extension program. However, as I reviewed the responsibilities of this Assistant Director position, I think I am qualified for this positioned based on my previously mentioned experiences. I look forward to trying to foster relationships needed to improve agriculture and natural resource management and community economic development programing in Oklahoma through improved cooperation between county, area and state personnel. I also look forward to collaborating with OAES, federal, state, and private agencies and organizations, as well as commodity groups as I have done this in the past to support advancement of my extension program. I see this as an opportunity to advance my impact on Oklahoma more broadly through providing positive leadership for our extension programs. Therefore, I look forward to discussing the other responsibilities of this position with you, and others with a vested interest in this important position within Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

Please find the list of references attached

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason G. Warren", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jason G. Warren

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