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January 18, 2011

John Berry, Director
US Office of Personnel Management
Theodore Roosevelt Federal Building
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20415-0001

Dear Director Berry,

A Presidential Memorandum dated May 11, 2010, directed OPM to evaluate the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP) and suggest new and improved routes to federal service for students and recent graduates. Last week, the President issued an Executive Order creating the Pathways Programs which hopefully, will provide our students and graduates with opportunities in the federal government. During the development of the regulations for Pathways, I ask you to consider broadly defining a qualifying degree to include all types of graduate education from accredited institutions of higher education. This would include master, professional and doctoral degree programs.

At Duke, one of our important missions is to educate the next generation of leaders, including those who choose federal service. Unfortunately, the USAJOBS competitive application process is so broken that we have seen very few qualified Duke students placed into federal positions through public listings in the past 10 years. It is not unusual for students to wait 9 months or more to hear from a submitted application, and many hear nothing at all. In addition, the recent Merit Systems Protection Board ruling has led the Office of Personnel Management to effectively freeze the FCIP, by far the largest hiring program for new master graduates into Executive Branch agencies, and the Presidential Management Fellowship program, where our students have had considerable success, is meant for the prestigious few.

Duke students planning careers in public service from across all disciplines at Duke are well-prepared and motivated to address pressing issues such as health care, education, foreign policy and national security and foreign assistance. For example, over 50 graduating

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seniors in 2010 chose to serve as Teach for America corps members, and TFA has been consistently among the top employers of Duke seniors over the past few years.

Without a reasonable pipeline into federal service and with little hope of jobs opening in state and local government, our students are choosing the private sector—primarily consulting firms with public sector clients. While these consultants are still addressing public sector problems, federal agencies must increase their internal capacity for policy and program analysis in order to manage these issues effectively. We want our students to choose the public sector, but without entry-level programs to attract them into service, our best students are going elsewhere.

I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Lange". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Lange
Provost