



May 25, 2022

University of North Texas  
College of Visual Arts and Design  
M.A. of Design in Interaction Design Faculty  
1201 W. Mulberry St.,  
Art Building, Room 101  
Denton, TX 76203

Dear University of North Texas M.A. in Interaction Design Faculty,

I am writing to express my intent to apply for the Master of Arts in Interaction Design at the UNT College of Visual Arts and Design. I am a strong candidate for this program based on:

- My twenty years of experience as a design professional- with four years leading a diverse web team.
- My passion for design, visual communication, and problem-solving
- How this program is integral to the future trajectory of my career as a transformative design leader

## **My Background**

Since my first design experiences in high school crafting newspaper layouts, a penchant for visual communication and empathetic design has been the North Star that has guided me through my professional and educational journey. For twenty years, I have developed expertise in graphic and print design, video editing, motion graphics, web design, and user experience design. Projects I have led in that time include producing a PSA video package for the Utah Clean Air Partnership, managing the visual identity for a religious non-profit, and strategically integrating eight college websites into one student-focused presence.

I currently work as the Director of Digital Experience at Dallas College. In this role, I have discovered that the common design thread that energizes me is storytelling— the ability to bring an audience or user through a curated journey with a defined beginning, middle, and end.

With my years of professional experience in design, team-driven leadership, and design thinking, I am equipped to jumpstart the next phase of my journey: the UNT Interaction Design program.

## Your Program

The UNT Interaction Design program appeals to me because of its in-person modality, research-fueled approach, and team-driven curriculum.

I have been impressed by your accomplished and well-connected faculty, like Brian Sullivan and Cassini Nazir, as they work with local organizations and design communities to bring unique opportunities and collaborative partnerships to your students.

I have observed projects from your program that deal with sexual harassment, recycling, and working with K12, and I appreciate that you prioritize design that is moral, inclusive, and socially innovative— a focus that aligns with my values.

## Our Future

Throughout my seven years working in higher education, I have noticed pieces of the student journey, both digital and physical, that are not meeting students' needs. This might be due to outdated operational practices or to a general lack of resources. But, through the implementation of design thinking and strategic user research, institutions can rethink and revolutionize the student experience. I want to be ready to lead that transformation.

To usher in this level of systemic change, a leader must prove the value of design research, advocate for users, evangelize the benefits of design thinking, break down self-imposed barriers, build cross-disciplinary relationships, and tell powerful stories. This is the leadership I hope to embody in my career. My partnership with the Interaction Design M.A. program is a key stepping stone in that journey.

I welcome the opportunity to further discuss my candidacy for this program with you. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luis Merino', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Luis Merino