



September 13, 2016

Dear Search Committee:

I am honored to submit my credentials for the position as **President** with my rank and tenure transferred to your esteemed institution. I have carefully examined the prospectus and related materials. Please accept this letter with the accompanying vitae and list of references as my application for the position.

My past experience these 16 + years in academia, I have served numerous professional roles such as Full Professor, Department Chair, Vice Provost, Dean(s), Director (of the Honors College), Coordinator (First Year Experience) and as Principal Investigator of a large research lab (undergraduate and graduate students) which I believe makes me an excellent fit for both the college and the position.

Moreover, in the role of administration, I have successfully served as Dean of Arts & Sciences and as Dean of Natural and Social Sciences at both a community college and a comprehensive university. Furthermore, I have also served for numerous years continually (2 terms) as Department Chair (Chemistry and Biochemistry Dept. -CUNY) which has provided me with a solid and diverse understanding of the promise of the University, College, and Community College settings. In particular, I have focused my attention to the areas which need improvement, the institutions strategic imperatives, and the common issues confronting higher education in the state(s) and nation. Currently, I teach and develop on-line chemistry courses for the University of New England and as a Professor of Chemistry at Florida Southern College.

I am now in my 16<sup>th</sup> year of successful, full-time administration in positions of increasing responsibilities and challenges. As a faculty member, I served previously at Western Kentucky University (WKU) as an Assistant Professor of Chemistry and University of Massachusetts Boston (UMB) as an Associate Professor of Organic and Green Chemistry. Later, I was recruited externally as a Full Professor (with tenure), Chair and Dean of Natural and Social Sciences at Lehman College-The City University of New York (CUNY) for the design of the new science center which would be exclusively the first a green science building on campus for research and teaching purposes. In addition, I served as Dean of Health and Natural Sciences and as Dean of Art & Sciences Pueblo Community College (PCC). My academic background is in organic synthesis, medicinal chemistry, and drug design. The attached CV provides detail on my experience and accomplishments in research and scholarly activities, teaching, student mentoring, and service to both college and the community.

Moreover, my CV details my administrative history and the institutional contexts in which I have served. The variety of those contexts has given me a rich background, including recent experiences at another institution PCC with a profile very much like that (regionally recognized, highly selective, part of a complex state system). My understanding of the dynamics and challenges of such institutions has been reinforced and enhanced during my time there. These include balancing selectivity in admissions with access, especially for students in historically underserved groups; valuing and integrating professional and liberal education; integrating curricular and student life initiatives; finding, articulating, and supporting the right balance between high-quality teaching and student focus and essential expectations for faculty research/scholarship/creative activity, in ways that differ from a research university; articulating value, for the individuals and groups upon whose support we depend; diversifying revenue sources; working within a multi-campus public system; sustaining a sound and attractive campus environment; and others. The

values, profile, and trajectory that make College/University such a special institution, as well as the challenges that one would face, are at the heart of my academic and leadership experience, there and at previous institutions. Certainly the background and record of success that I brought to the Colleges are relevant to the on-campus work and this work is also delineated on my CV. I have gained additional experience and perspective in these areas the past several years. Among others, these include personnel; budget; program support and development; work with faculty and staff unions and with governance; and strategic planning. My experience has given me a broad understanding of the workings of colleges/universities, an opportunity to work with students in diverse settings, insights into major issues in higher education, and perspective on facilitating change.

My previous positions has introduced me to new challenges and roles. My growing familiarity with non-academic parts of the College has deepened my appreciation for the complexity of institutional management, leadership, and teamwork – and the opportunities therein. I believe I have worked well and effectively with a wonderful group of administrators and with the leadership and advisory groups that I have either inherited or created. I have learned much about working with students, student journalists, and student governance groups, on different issues than in my previous academic experience.

In addition, my external interactions have also been extensive, diverse, and enjoyable, and I have received positive feedback, direct and second-hand, about my effectiveness in these roles. I have worked with the media in multiple capacities; individuals and civic organizations; other administrators (Deans & VP's) of regional community colleges, individually and as a group; state and federal legislators; in several advocacy capacities; the Foundation, including helping to recruit new Board members and to support a future fund-raising campaign; College Council; alumni, supporters, prospective donors, and parents; state leadership including the Lt. Governor, other central administrators, campus presidents; regional business and industry leaders, as part of growing expectations to support economic development.

This work will reinforce that the strategic positioning of the College/University will demand greater external focus by the administration and faculty, including but certainly not limited to fund-raising and development. While the Dean must maintain an appropriate on-campus presence and leadership/decision-making role, external demands will require changes in some of our expectations about how the dean allocates time and attention. I would expect to build on my development and donor-cultivation experiences with other Deans and VP's and my outreach experiences this year to grow in my effectiveness at fund-raising and development; I also have views on needed change in institutional and Foundation Board capacity to support a stronger philanthropic effort. I have demonstrated my ability to communicate effectively and easily with diverse people and constituencies, to convey our needs and passion for our enterprise, and to think strategically about institutional opportunities and how we build support for them. I continue to participate in learning sessions on fund-raising and development and professional development opportunities.

Also, I worked well with faculty unions at WKU, UMASS and CUNY. I am supportive of the principle of faculty and staff collective bargaining of which, I have experience in sustaining positive working relationships with all employee unions. I have attempted to do this through clear and regular communication with the campus community about difficult issues, and through frank, honest interaction with union leaders.

Several critical national and state public policy issues form the context for the next phase of leadership at College or University. Chief among these is the need for a more highly educated citizenry so that we have the intellectual capacity in our state and nation to confront the problems and opportunities before us. Greater degree production is needed at the two-year, baccalaureate, and graduate levels. Beyond simply the number of degrees, though, is the nature and quality of the education our students receive along the way. Does their education equip them to function as productive citizens and leaders in today's world? A further issue is that university research and scholarship is expected to contribute to economic and social development in more demonstrable ways, creating new jobs and ideas that find their way to the marketplace. Finally, higher education is expected to operate with ever-greater cost-effectiveness and accountability as states and individuals are pressed harder for competing demands on resources. I myself would lead by example. That

being said, I would like to continue doing scholarly research, publishing data and results, grant-writing and teaching a class for the Chemistry Department at least once a year.

The campus is collectively well-positioned to address these public policy issues. Together they cover the entire degree spectrum and have an innovative faculty equipped with a wide range of pedagogical expertise. Some of the campuses have broad capabilities in research and creative scholarship, and the College already operates among the most efficient in the country. Each campus has the potential the state development. A principal challenge will be to achieve the optimal balance between individual campus character and the efficiency that comes with the sharing of resources. The campus in is clearly the one I most familiar with. It has the promise to become a model for today's research college through the integration of its research, education, and service missions. The campus has attracted a stellar faculty of teacher-scholars that has built an array of intriguing and relevant academic programs. The size combines the best of critical mass and community spirit. Also, the campus definitely has its own distinctive "personality" and is among the most attractive in the nation. Its foundation of accomplishment, if honed through a deliberate effort to focus resources, can propel it to a position of leadership with other Colleges and research universities (e.g. State and Private Universities and Colleges and the Community College System, etc.)

In articulating a vision for College/University as a whole, I will focus on four areas. Each campus presents both contributions and challenges in each, but each has a strong base upon which to build. The college must strive to be part of a family among surrounding colleges & universities that achieves leadership in the following areas:

**Opportunity-** I firmly believe that the core function of universities is to maximize opportunities for the people who study and work in them. At the undergraduate level, a healthy range of challenging programs must be in place to permit students to pursue their dreams, develop their talents, and open their eyes to possibilities that they didn't otherwise see. We must work with our K-12 colleagues to articulate clearly the preparation needed to ensure student success and to make such preparation available to all students. We must provide the academic, financial, and social support such that students can keep their attention on achieving their goals. Distinctive opportunities for undergraduates abound within Lesley University, the surrounding area competition within the STEM emphasis at other college & universities. However, opportunity isn't limited to our undergraduate students. Strategically focused graduate programs should provide the opportunity for advanced study alongside engaged scholars in a research-intensive environment. The faculty, staff, and administrators also need to be continually challenged and provided with the support needed to grow professionally. In other words, the entire university should be focused upon continual learning of all of its members.

**Impact-** It is crucial that the work done at College/University has the highest possible impact on people's lives and on the communities we serve. That impact might be measured in the number and quality of our graduates who enter the workforce. It might also be expressed in the depth of understanding of the most abstract intellectual matters or in the way a creative work moves those who experience it. Our students need to understand their own impact by having the chance to put their education to work through internships, civic engagement, research and creative activity. Our faculty must focus on research questions of high significance and the results should be disseminated in the best venues. We must bring our collective knowledge to bear upon key problems through technology transfer, service and outreach. The campus should consider their impact on a scale from their immediate surrounding communities to the world.

**Responsibility-** Colleges/Universities has a special set of responsibilities to the state and the nation. First and foremost, the institutions must be places that foster freedom of thought and expression. It is our responsibility to promote constructive dialogue on forefront issues so that our students, employees, and community members can arrive at informed conclusions. It is our responsibility to be centers for diversity in all forms, embracing and providing a safe environment for responsible people of all backgrounds. We have a special responsibility to honor all heritages and it is gratifying to see progress in that regard. Our campuses must assume leadership toward a sustainable future, and our natural setting reminds us on a daily basis of

the importance of our environment. We have a responsibility to help our students realize the connections between their daily actions and the rest of the world.

**Vitality-** Underpinning the college as a successful university is a sense of excitement and energy. The people that come to the College, whether on a daily basis to study or work, as visitors to the array of cultural, athletic or academic events, or as participants in outreach efforts, must feel immersed in a “charged” atmosphere. They should feel surrounded by colleagues who are committed, enthusiastic and among the best in their respective roles. An ambitious program of special events should provide abundant opportunities for the campus and community. Campuses must bring in provocative thinkers from “outside” to continually challenge us. At the time of hire, we must ask about each applicant, “Is this a person who will raise our expectations and help infuse our campus with creative energy?”

U. S. colleges and universities must be concerned with equity, diversity, and inclusiveness, and must expect their leaders to advance these goals – while also recognizing that *everyone* must share in this work. I have a record of hiring that has enhanced faculty and staff diversity, and I actively encourage women and minorities with strong potential or experience to pursue leadership and administrative roles and positions, with positive results. All administrative/managerial appointments that I have made at institutions have encouraged women and minorities applications alike. Furthermore, all appointments were made devoid of discrimination against a person on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability in its programs, activities or employment. As outlined on my CV, I have engaged in extensive efforts to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusiveness during my time at CUNY and PCC by attending various forms professional development seminars. The diversity at of the college (across many dimensions) should be a strong and special part of our institution, although I believe much work remains to enhance any campus climate and institutional life by more fully embracing and reflecting the values we espouse.

My administrative and leadership style and values are long-established and consistent, and have served me well in all of my roles. In my 2013 application for the Dean position, I described my leadership style as collegial, personal, and consultative, and commented on my efforts to treat people fairly and respectfully and to model civility. I noted that in previous positions, people had described me as fair, balanced, hardworking, patient, and willing to listen to and consider conflicting viewpoints. I wrote also about reports that I communicate openly and extensively; about feedback on the clarity and honesty of my communication as well as my listening skills; and that I often exercise my quiet sense of humor in my work place.

Further, in a climate survey of my performance as a 3<sup>rd</sup>-year Dean at CUNY in 2008-09, well over 80% of respondents agreed about my administrative effectiveness; encouragement of high academic standards; respect for academic freedom; integrity; effective advocacy; approachability; openness to new ideas and opinions; and contributions to strategic planning. In a 2002 performance review, my overall effectiveness was rated as good or excellent by 96% of respondents; my academic leadership at 94%; effectiveness in interactions outside the unit at 88%; and consultation with faculty or staff senate at 93. I received CUNY’s Outstanding Academic Administrator Award in 2010. While at PCC, I also underwent a survey of the campus climate and a 360° evaluation (a yearly evaluation of administrators in the state of Colorado demonstrating the success or failure on closing the gap (or loop) on problems pointed out anomalously from all campus personal). My evaluation was excellent.

I hope that this positive history and these same attributes have been affirmed during my time at my previous institutions. They certainly will continue to define my leadership in any position I hold. I would also add that I place great value in building community in the units I lead, and would intend to continue my commitment to building a sense of shared value and common direction across the College. Those values are exemplified by my establishment of a new Administrative Council or Dean’s faculty brown bags or “Coffee with the Dean Happy Hour” and my support for an “early-career faculty” group twice a year. Further, I have established policies and procedures on awarding emeritus status to both faculty and staff at Pueblo Community College which is a first for the college.

I will share a sampling (incomplete) of elements of my current vision for the future of College/University and the direction of this administrative post in coming years, and will be pleased to discuss these and other ideas with you. Several of my own thoughts about key institutional needs and opportunities align closely with suggestions of the recent accreditation, site-review draft reports; these suggestions give a clear road-map for several key initiatives and directions in the coming years to:

- Continue the quest to become the premier liberal-arts-based public comprehensive university in the area and the state;
- Change and adjust our practices to sustain and grow our vitality and our notable quality of academic and student life, even in the face of severely diminished resources;
- become increasingly student-focused, continue improving the student experience;
- continue to advance student learning and increase retention/graduation rates;
- Complete a successful, first-ever major comprehensive fund-raising campaign;
- undertake a strategic planning effort to refine understanding of our vision and operationalize vision points for all units and link our plans to *any* system or state plan. Such planning must build on our vision points, which have served us well and which we would abandon at our peril;
- Direct more effort to our public mission and to strengthening our regional role and contributions, including support for economic development;
- Support the President, Provost, VP's, Deans and Chairs in strengthening, refining, and expanding sound programs that enrich our core mission and that have considerable unrealized potential (*e.g.* honors college, undergraduate research, living-learning programs, developmental education, etc.);
- Support the President, Provost, VP's, Deans, Chairs, HR, and others in expanding programs for faculty and Department Chair development and support, and in strengthening profile and role of Department Chairs as academic leaders;
- Increase our efficiency and effectiveness by evaluating and modifying or replacing processes and operations that do not serve us well;
- Continue advocacy to enhance our taxpayer-funded resource base;
- Expand efforts to build an inclusive and equitable campus culture;
- Continue efforts to improve the campus physical environment to support our mission;
- Continue and expand focus on environmental sustainability, within resource constraints;
- Strengthen the sense of community, shared mission and value, and integration across the College.

In addition, I will also address tasks with the key themes below:

- Promote the distinctive strengths of the institution as a leader in creative practice.
- Lead academic planning and build organizational structures that support the academic enterprise.
- Build and retain a strong faculty.
- Build a high-performing team of academic and administrative leaders.
- Develop the natural networks and communities that are connected to the institution in order to enhance the student experience and extend the Institutions reach.
- Work across the aisle judiciously to merge the Office of Student Affairs & Academic Affairs into a more cohesive unit rather than two distinct units operating independently.

There are many practical operational areas to which we must attend in order to realize the ideals above. In recent months I have received helpful feedback and direction through accreditation visits, strategic planning, and extensive assessment pedagogy. That feedback tells us that we need to focus additional energy on communication within and across our campuses and with our various constituencies. We need to improve the connection between strategic thinking and our budgeting processes, and we must strengthen our assessment protocols. In some cases, lines of responsibility need to be clarified and the roles of our cherished shared governance bodies defined more clearly. There is always room for improvement in IT, libraries, and supporting infrastructure to provide for greater responsiveness.

If given the opportunity to serve in this position at the college, I will approach the position with faculty and staff guidance on an approximately 5-year timeframe in mind. The first two years will focus on solidifying strategic direction through active conversation, optimizing organizational structures and practices, building the relationships that will carry the college forward, and undertaking a resource-focusing exercise. Year three will emphasize transformative resource generation from all sources. In that year, we will focus on building one of the most effective learning environments available in public education and on the maturation of the campus as a highly competitive institution. The final years will be used to complete implementation.

In the years that I have had the privilege to serve other Colleges/Universities, I have become ever more convinced that it is a set of institutions with distinctive promise for educating tomorrow's citizens. The dedication of the people associated with the school, the range of approaches of the various colleges in different states, and the desire to do excellent work position the institutions to excel at achieving their respective missions. After reviewing the desired qualifications and characteristics as outlined in the prospectus, I believe that my background and my approach present an excellent match to the needs of the college at this time. My years in higher education as a faculty member and administrator have given me a broad perspective and set of experiences that will serve the college well.

I look forward to the opportunity to serve as your next colleague. Please let me know if I can provide any further information regarding my candidacy. I am confident my strong teaching skills, research experiences and leadership/interpersonal skills will no doubt serve as a successful faculty/administration member at your outstanding University. It would be a pleasure to visit the campus or discuss the opportunity by phone.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at **(719) 281-9647** or via e-mail or [rsalvatore@flsouthern.edu](mailto:rsalvatore@flsouthern.edu) to discuss my candidacy at any time. A list of professional references with contact information is also enclosed for your review at the end of my CV.

Thank you for time and consideration. I look forward in speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,



**Ralph Nicholas Salvatore, Ph.D.**

*Professor of Chemistry*

Florida Southern College

Department of Chemistry, Biochemistry & Physics

Polk Science 212

111 Lake Hollingsworth Dr.

Lakeland, Florida 33801

Phone no: 719-281-9647

E-mails: [rsalvatore@flsouthern.edu](mailto:rsalvatore@flsouthern.edu) || [drralph.salvatore@outlook.com](mailto:drralph.salvatore@outlook.com)

**SKYPE ID:** [ralphnsalvatore](#) || **Twitter:** [@drchemistryprof](#)

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