

September 23, 2016

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

Please accept my application for the position of the President at Florida Gulf Coast University, a position for which I am uniquely qualified.

**Education, teaching, and faculty senate experience** - I received a BA in English Literature and Linguistics, an MBA in Aviation Management, and a PhD in Marketing with a minor in Psychology. The diverse background in my education has provided me with the necessary experience and ability to reach out to a larger academic community in my executive and senior administration appointments. I have over 30 years of experience in higher education and have moved up the faculty ranks: adjunct faculty, instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor with tenure. I was nominated for the University of North Carolina-Wilmington “Chancellor Teaching Excellence Award” and was identified by UNCW graduates as an “Impact Professor” – a faculty member who had significant positive impact on students. I was very active with the University of North Carolina Wilmington’s Faculty Senate in several capacities – the Chair of Research Committee, a member of Academic Standards Committee, and a member of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

**Executive and senior level experience in higher education administration** – I have 20 years of executive and senior level administration experience and have progressively moved up the administration ranks. I served as Program Chair, Dean of School of Business, Division Head of Behavioral Sciences and Business, Dean of School of Business and Economics, Dean of College of Business and Social Sciences, Graduate Dean, Vice Provost, and Vice President for Academic Affairs. My executive level administrative experience and accomplishments range from shared governance and collective bargaining; diversity strategic planning; holistic student development, enrollment management, retention & graduation; strategic planning; fiscal management; online education; institutional & specialized accreditation; student outcome assessment; and new academic program development. The Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, Virginia Attorney General's Office, and Virginia Secretary of Education have all recognized my leadership skills at VSU for achieving the last item (accreditation of school of business) in a 30-year accord between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the US Department of Education.

**Diversity and human rights** – I have promoted diversity and race relations for over two decades. I served as the steering committee member of the Institute for Studying of Race Relations (ISRR) at Virginia State University. I am the founding Chair of International Human Rights Conference at West Virginia State University. I have promoted the rights of women, the rights of children, the rights of minorities, and the rights of LGBT among others. I have demonstrated my commitment to the mission of minority institutions and have served three minority institutions (HBCU) during the past 17 years - Virginia State University (1890 land grant), Elizabeth City State University, and West Virginia State University (1890 land grant). I am an active Board member at Southern Christian Leadership Foundation.

**Multi-campus institutions and higher education boards** – I have served the mission of small and large and multi-campus universities - Griffith University in Australia (5 campuses with 44,500 students), Texas A&M University System (11 campuses with 143,000 students), and the University of North

Carolina System (17 campuses with 222,000 students). I worked extensively with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), and the Higher Education Policy Commission in WV (HEPC).

**Research and publication** – I have published over 50 academic articles and 6 books. My research is known internationally in such areas as human rights, business compassion, CRM, and relationship marketing. My research and views on student holistic development and enrollment management have been received national attention and were published in the *New York Times*. My aviation-related publication has been used in reports for the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the American Bar Association. I am the founding Editor of the Journal of Relationship Marketing. Before joining higher education, I spent ten years in several industries such as aviation, hospitality, and financial services.

**Fiscal Management** – I have extensive experience in fiscal management due to my formal graduate training and education in business administration. I have also managed large budgets in business before joining higher education. In addition, I have managed large budgets in my positions as Vice Provost, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Business Dean of four different universities. I have been recognized by Texas A&M and other universities for achieving high level of efficiencies in budget and space utilization.

**Shared Governance and collective bargaining** - I served as Vice-Provost for administration at Virginia State University. One of the major initiatives at VSU in which I played a key leadership role was our successful three-year effort to create an entirely new Shared Governance System. As Co-Chair of the Taskforce on Shared Governance, I led a university-wide process that allowed the university to move from an unnecessarily adversarial relationship between administration and faculty, grounded in an outdated governance system, to the creation and adoption of a shared governance system that has improved relations at VSU across the board. I accomplished this task through collaboration with Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, SGA, Vice Presidents, Deans, and Chairs. One of the most crucial innovations was the creation of the first University Council, which provided a seat at the table to all VSU stakeholders. I was elected in 2003 to the UC by the at-large university community (faculty, staff, administrators), and, subsequently, elected by the members of the UC to become Co-Chair of the UC (which is the highest elected position one can hold at VSU). It is through shared governance partnerships that I have been able to develop new degree programs and meet the needs of the stakeholders. Further, in Australia, I participated in collective bargaining representing the administration on two collective bargaining agreements.

**External Relationship, Collaboration, and Partnership** - I believe that universities have not only the capacity but also the responsibility to reach out to the community, forming partnerships to enhance the quality of life for its citizens. I have succeeded in reaching this goal in numerous ways. For example, I served as a member of the Texas A&M Engineering Forum which established engineering programs based on the needs of 20 area employers, served as a member of the Texas A & M University's Community Development program, established a partnership between the Griffith University Retailing Program and TAFE community college system of Australia to offer a joint Degree in Retail Management, received several grants for engaging the community, developing strong outreach partnerships and establishing collaborative research programs. I was selected as one of the top leaders in the Texas A & M University system to participate in the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grant, and I

presently work in an environment where approximately \$7.5 million is faculty generated for sponsored research and grants each year. I think you will find that I possess a thorough understanding of the budgeting and funding processes, and my progressive fund raising techniques have produced successful results. In the following sections, I provide four examples of external relationships that I have played major roles in their development.

- 1. K-12 and Community Colleges Articulations** – I have been instrumental in creating 15 articulation agreements with 15 community colleges in the U.S., Australia, and China in health sciences, education, and STEM. In addition, I led several K-12 agreements in early enrollment and 1+3 articulations.
- 2. Celebrate Wilmington** - Partnering with the Art Community, Chair, Celebrate Wilmington Marketing Committee, AND Member, Steering Committee, (UNCW Chancellor’s Project) - Played a major role in making Chancellor Leutze’s four-year project a reality – bridging the gap between UNCW and the Greater Wilmington Art Community. This was a turnaround situation, which had failed in previous four attempts. We established, “Celebrate Wilmington” - an annual event, celebrating the joint programs between the university and the art community. The goals were: (1) to create an awareness in the community about the diversity of the arts, (2) to encourage and support those involved in the arts to excel in their endeavors, (3) to educate and expand our audiences to support the work of various artists, and (4) to entice people to visit Wilmington and discover its sense of community and cultural diversity.
- 3. Supermarket for the inner-city** - Reaching Out to Communities With Need, Chair, Marketing and Need Assessment, (UNCW Chancellor’s Project) – Brought UNCW to the People in the Inner City. As the Chair of Marketing and Need Assessment as well as a member of the steering committee, I helped the chancellor and the university to respond to a very difficult Economic Development Challenge – to build a cooperative supermarket in Wilmington’s North-side and adjacent downtown neighborhoods, which have been without convenient access to their most essential retail services. Through the division of Public Service and continuing education, we mobilized the university resources and secured a grant support from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to fund the start-up phase of the project.

**Passion to serve** – I have repeatedly demonstrated my passion for being a transformative servant leader advocating for the rights of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and business and community at large. My colleagues refer to me as “a Remarkable Mediator, the Collaborator, and the Bridge Builder”. My core values are compassion, human rights, diversity, collaboration, and integrity. I am a board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Foundation and served on the United Way Board.

**Conclusion** - In my roles as professor, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, Head of the Retailing Program, Vice Provost for Administration, Deans of several schools and colleges, I have incorporated the leadership attributes that are acquired through formal coursework and, most importantly, from experience. I believe that my experiences as a member of the teaching faculty have sensitized me to the university culture. However, my other positions have helped me develop a vision that encompasses a much larger community.

I bring an international perspective to education that has served me extremely well in dealing with multi-cultural diversity. Having lived, studied, and worked in several different countries and several different types of higher education institutions has provided me with a rich array of tools, and a much deeper appreciation, for the multiple experiential backgrounds members of our university campuses bring to the table. In addition, I bring my business administration and marketing background; my industry experience; and my technical knowledge in STEM from the field of Aviation. But most importantly, I bring a perspective of a first generation college student who truly appreciates the importance, value, and benefits of higher education.

In summary, I believe that my record indicates that I am a proven leader and an articulate and energetic advocate for the university and community. Most importantly, I have direct and invaluable experience, which makes me an exceptional candidate for the position. The above paragraphs have been an effort to respond to each of the major qualities that you are seeking in your candidate.

Sincerely,

[David Bejou](#)

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