

September 27, 2016

To whom it may concern,

This letter is in support of my candidacy for the position of President for Florida Gulf Coast University.

With respect to expectations inherent in the Leadership Profile, throughout my career I have been dedicated to developing, implementing and assessing transformative and visionary initiatives informed by unwavering integrity and collaboration. My commitment to fostering an institutional *culture of success* is predicated on ethical and synergistic approaches as I have supervised a comprehensive portfolio of strategic planning initiatives while managing multi-million dollar budgets. This letter illustrates how my vision supports and addresses specific challenges and opportunities inherent in this position:

I) Support increased enrollment via innovative academic programs

An example of my ability to thrive within interdisciplinary and collaborative frameworks, utilizing assessment to enhance enrollment is found in my current research paradigm. I have partnered with faculty and the college academic support center to utilize curricular infusion of career development across multiple academic departments and within academic tutoring. In my research I have found that students who engage in informed career decision making earlier in the career have higher retention, achieve faster credit accumulation leading to lower cost and have greater motivation and self-expectancy.

At Atlantic Cape Community College, 95% of the 500+ students who have participated in this research indicate they have "learned something new" and are "more motivated to reach the goals they identify" as a result of the various interventions. Additionally, students have shown a 41% increase in career maturity via their assigned writing when assessed via a rubric I co-developed. Employing assessment-loop methodology, I have analyzed the "next steps" that students identified and used this data to inform policy revisions with respect to curriculum design, program development, institutional marketing and recruitment. This research has been presented at regional, national and international conferences and led to our receiving the 2016 NASPA Student Affairs Partnering with Academic Affairs Promising Practices Award. This research is featured in a book I co-edited and co-authored, *Academic and Student Affairs in Collaboration: Promoting a Culture of Student Success*, published June 2016.

As a curriculum development consultant for the Long Island University Graduate School of Education, I designed the syllabi and assessment metrics for a four-course post-graduate certificate in Systemic Crisis Management. Utilizing need assessment methodology, I proposed Long Island University determine if there was a need for such a program in the New York/Tri-State region. Once they identified the need I agreed to develop the curriculum and assessment

instruments. The curriculum and respective materials were approved by the New York State Department of Education.

II) Executing the strategic plan

An example of how I have implemented collaborative programming in support of strategic planning is the synergy I created between Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Institutional Technology and Facilities Management to design and develop three Student Success and Career Planning Centers for Atlantic Cape Community College. This was accomplished in support of Strategic Plan Goal 1: *Maximize Student Success*.

Another example was the infusion of career development into the Freshman Seminar program I chaired at Passaic County C.C. in support of strategic planning goals addressing student success. This paradigm shift led to a 4% increase in freshman retention within two years. In addition, the Career Centers at Passaic County C.C. and Atlantic Cape C.C. addressed strategic planning goals of increased community engagement by serving college students, Workforce Development initiatives and various K-12 interventions. A recent example is the New Jersey State *College and Career Readiness* grant for Wildwood (NJ) High School Juniors utilizing a Career Boot Camp curriculum I co-developed as one of our Achieving the Dream (AtD) initiatives.

III) Making critical decisions

Throughout my career, I have been responsible for the development, implementation and assessment of crisis management protocols and supervised numerous BIT-Teams. In this capacity I have also served on the Advisory Board of NaBITA and as a Threat Assessment Consultant for NCHERM.

During my career I have also served as the Chair and Program Director of various Student Success courses and *Bridge Programs* responsible for the budget management, recruitment and hiring of faculty and development of assessment reports illustrating the alignment of program expenses with student outcomes. As an administrator I have supervised and provided oversight of personal, transfer, career, academic and crisis counseling; disability support services, Title IX program development, athletics, training of Residential Life staff, Student Activities and Student Government. In 2011 my colleagues and I received the 2011 NASPA Student Affairs Partnering with Academic Affairs Promising Practices Award for the *Art of Advising* faculty development seminar we designed promoting faculty engagement in *Developmental Advising* (NACADA) and New Student Orientation. This innovative paradigm shift led to 100+ faculty volunteering each semester to participate, contributing to a 47% increase in early registration and a 6% increase in freshman retention within one year.

IV) Building community through communication and transparency

Throughout my career I have maintained a personal and professional commitment to social justice, appreciation of diversity and elimination of prejudice. As a clinician, I have espoused and trained others to utilize best practices in culturally sensitive counseling. As a faculty member with 25+ years of experience I taught graduate courses in Multicultural Counseling and while at Iona College participated in many service Learning initiatives such as *Habitat for Humanity*, *Relay for Life*, *Make-a-Difference Day* and as a chaperone of an alternative Spring Break to Washington, D.C. to work with the *Coalition for the Homeless*.

V) Leveraging the University's assets and reputation to generate additional revenue

To meet the diverse needs of the external community including industry and K-12 programs I have successfully obtained additional support via strategic financial planning. For example, I have authored and assessed numerous grants which received funding to establish campus-community coalitions and have been retained as an Expert Consultant to an NIH Grant to develop an interactive on-line program promoting retention and career preparation among non-traditional students. In addition, I have developed a number of successful alumni engagement initiatives which increased commitment to serving respective institutions. I have also participated in Middle States, CACREP and ADA accreditation processes, having authored Standard and Progress Reports which were approved by the MSCHE.

VI) Playing a leading role in the community

As the Assistant Director of Counseling at Iona College I worked closely with the Office of Campus Ministries to develop numerous service learning opportunities for specific cohorts such as freshmen engaged in over-night community service Orientation programs. In addition I was co-founder of the Iona College P.A.S.S. (Promoting Academic Success of Student-Athletes) program which contributed to a number of teams achieving top-five and top-ten standing nationally for academic achievement. One key tenet of this program was that each team was required to participate each semester in community service.

Given my diverse portfolio, I believe I possess the requisite experience and vision to embrace the opportunities presented by this position and reframe the challenges into transformative growth. Thank you for your consideration of my candidacy.

Sincerely,

Mitchell A. Levy

Dr. Mitchell A. Levy