

October 6, 2016

Witt/Kieffer Consultants and Search Committee  
Florida Gulf Coast University  
Fort Myers, FL

Dear Search Committee

The goal in higher education is to help students of all ages and social/economic backgrounds to better comprehend and negotiate their relationships with the larger world. The faculty, students, staff, and administration at Florida Gulf Coast University are positioned to move toward even greater levels of prominence by building on its rich mission of quality education, research and service. It is because of the mission of Florida Gulf Coast University and my deep belief in the power of higher education to transform the lives of young people that I submit my application for the position of President.

Currently I serve as Vice Provost and Dean, which over the years has included The Boyer College of Music and Dance, the Tyler School of Arts and Architecture, the School of Theater, Film and Media Arts, the Temple University Performing Arts Center and oversight of academic programs in Rome and Tokyo. I have been directly responsible for all academic and business operations for approximately 3,500 students, 510 full and part-time faculty, 90 staff, and budgets up to \$93 million. Students pursue degrees ranging from the BS to the PhD, including programs that are recognized internationally for innovation in teaching, interdisciplinary collaboration and excellence in scholarship. Graduates can be found in major leadership, community, academic, business and creative positions throughout the world and hold professorships at major universities such as Yale, University of Michigan, NYU and Columbia, to name a few.

Prior to my appointment at Temple University, I served in five different administrative positions and as a faculty member at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX.

As Dean and Vice Provost, I have worked successfully with academic deans, department heads, student services professionals, faculty and staff to create new policies and practices to strengthen the academic and scholarly mission of Temple University. I have a track record of quickly leading change, transparency in decision making, innovation and transformative strategies. Also, I have extensive experience in strengthening academic excellence, managing the fiscal resources of complex organizations, leading strategic planning and success in fundraising/alumni development.

My vision and passion is to work closely with faculty, administration, students and staff to reach new levels of excellence, academic access and programmatic innovation while expanding the local, national and global reputation of the institution. I am dedicated to serving and improving the quality of life of students from every socio-economic group for the overall betterment of society. In addition, I am committed to ensure 4 year graduation rates and control student debt while clearly demonstrating the return on investments to

students, alumni, community leaders and donors. The following are select initiatives/accomplishments that I have used to build academic momentum:

- Developed new student **recruitment and retention strategies** resulting in strong yields and the highest average SAT scores of first-year students at Temple University.
- Worked with faculty and staff to increase the ranking of the Tyler School of Art from 14<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> nationally by *US News and World Report* in 2012.
- Provide senior leadership to improve **graduation rates, student debt, and financial aid/scholarship allocations.**
- **Fixed structural deficits** by bringing financial transparency to the annual budget process, implementing operational efficiencies, and strategic budgeting practices.
- Increased **entrepreneurial revenue generation** within academic units.
- Established aggressive **faculty recruitment strategies** which have resulted in the appointments of internationally renowned teachers, scholars and artists.
- Developed and funded **new research and creative grant programs.**
- Established and strengthened **international partnerships and study away programs** to better prepare students to live and work in our interconnected world.
- **Provide senior leadership** in the design process and funding of new facilities on campus.
- Founded and currently serve as Executive Producer of *BCM&D Records*, a 3-time **Grammy** nominated record label at Temple University.
- Increased **alumni participation** rates to some of the highest on campus and successfully expanded development goals, strategies and gifts.
- Co-chair of the Temple University Middle States Executive Committee.
- Established the **George and Joy Abbott Center of Musical Theatre** at Temple University through a historic multi-million dollar gift that gives ownership rights and future royalties earned by theater productions authored by George Abbott (Mr. Broadway). Included in this gift is George Abbott memorabilia such as his Tony Awards, Pulitzer Prize and Kennedy Center Lifetime Achievement Award.
- Created and launched the **Arts and Quality of Life Research Center (AQL Center)** to support and facilitate disciplinary and interdisciplinary quantitative, qualitative and historical research concerning the use of the arts in the promotion

of quality of life within a multicultural society. The Center strives to provide an interdisciplinary forum promoting cross-unit discussions and new collaborative initiatives for faculty and students in such areas as medicine, health studies, social work, education, performing and visual arts, counseling psychology, the Institute on Disabilities, and Temple Hospital. The Center has conducted research examining the effects of the arts with cancer, HIV, heart patients, the elderly and children living in at-risk environments.

In addition, the AQL Center provides grant-writing workshops, research conferences, and currently has 10 approved Cochrane research reviews which are recognized as the highest standard in evidence-based health care research.

- Improved community outreach efforts by establishing the “**Boyer: Building Better Communities**” program. Select outreach initiatives in this program include various student volunteer groups, arts-based community outreach to persons confined in hospitals and treatment centers, and subsidized arts instruction and classes to underprivileged children in the Philadelphia area.

My commitment to academic, research, community and creative excellence is supported by my belief that leadership should be characterized by integrity, focus, and tenacity. Throughout my career, I have expanded the reach of the institutions by clearly linking decisions to vision, transparency in decision making, developing comprehensive strategic plans with faculty and staff, being fully engaged and visible on campus, and speaking the truth.

I would welcome the opportunity to serve Florida Gulf Coast University as President as we collectively move toward greater levels of academic excellence while embracing the core values of integrity, curiosity, creativity and responsibility. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 856-625-2468 if any additional information is needed.

I do request that this application remain confidential.

Sincerely,

Robert T. Stroker, Ph.D.  
Vice Provost and Dean