To Dr. Ken Smith and the Florida Gulf Coast University Community:

I dropped out of high school at age sixteen, failed at business twice, and have dyslexia. Perhaps not a very stellar start, but through these experiences, I learned to think out side of the box and have broad and inclusive discussions with people more talented than me, which led to thoughtful and well informed decisions. I am innovative and entrepreneurial, engage with internal and external stakeholders, and have a strong moral compass. After completing a doctorate in education, I taught at four universities, published extensively, attracted a million dollar gift as part of a capital campaign, chaired a department, served as a college dean, started a doctoral program, and along the way developed a successful business. Through these experiences, I have acquired the following demonstrated skills and abilities:

- Executed a strategic academic plan resulting in the creation of a new doctoral degree in educational leadership
- Worked as a member of the governor's committee on workforce development articulating the need for general education that promotes critical thinking, innovation, and team building.
- Established learning communities and study abroad programs
- Upgrade classrooms with new technology and taught online courses using Blackboard
- Completed SACS, CACREP, and NCATE accreditations
- Improved retention and four-year graduation rates
- Executed a twenty million dollar budget
- Taught, advised students, and published
- Started a program to attract men of color to education
- Used data and intuition to make decisions
- Communicated orally and in writing monthly to the university community to keep them informed and involved
- Got results by involving the university community in the decision making process
- Attended as many university functions as possible
- Did what I said I was going to do
- Worked closely with the Teaching and Learning Center to provide professional development to faculty and staff.

- Developed and marketed a niche
- Contained costs while building revenue

I served in a senior administrative role at a university that cut administrative bloat, increased enrollments, improved graduation rates, and provided a raise to everyone annually. We accomplished these results by consolidating administrative positions, creating new academic programs, focusing on student success, and containing costs. I will advocate for the faculty while relentlessly pursuing new academic degree programs, slashing administrative costs, upgrading classrooms, providing excellent parking for faculty, attracting new resources, and seeking full accreditation for all possible programs. Because I am an athlete, I also understand the importance of sports. I will work with the vice presidents, deans, professors, and athletic director to raise external funds to improve the academy.

I will advocate for students while improving the retention of first-year students and four-year graduation rates by supporting the following programs: need-based financial aid, academic recovery programs, degree completion incentives, student progress reports, learning communities, tutoring, and merit scholarships. I will support transition programs for first-year students, civic engagement for second-year students, experiential learning for third-year, and research project for fourth-year students.

With a strong commitment to higher education and as a business owner, rest assured that I can implement the new strategic plan while expanding the financial resources of the University, work closely with the board and the University community, implement a thoughtful, intentional, inclusive process for all proposed

changes, communicate my intentions honestly and openly, and nurture innovation. I have the will and skill to increase efficiencies, manage costs, and grow revenue. I will foster a strong sense of community by having broad open conversations. I am also committed to environmental sustainability and look forward to enhancing your efforts to save the planet. I would love to help you accomplish your goals and develop a crisp message to market your niche in higher education.

With warm regards,

William L. Phillips, Ed.D.

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