

Bradley Skelcher  
1 Village Drive  
Smyrna, Delaware 19977

October 24, 2016

Search Committee  
Position of President  
Florida Gulf Coast University

Dear Search Committee:

It is with tremendous excitement that I submit this letter of application for the position of President of Florida Gulf Coast University.

The following is a brief description of my qualifications for the position of President of Florida Gulf Coast University. I hold a Ph.D. in Historical Studies from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Presently, I hold tenure and the rank of Professor of History at Delaware State University. I also have seventeen years of administrative experience beginning in 1999 as Director of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation at Delaware State University. In the Spring Semester 2004, I was appointed Director of Graduate Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences at Delaware State University. I held this position until July 2004 when I was appointed Acting Dean of the newly created College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Delaware State University serving in this capacity until I was appointed Dean of the renamed College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences in July 2007. As founding Dean, I established the new college that grew to be the largest college at the University in student enrollment. Following its establishment, the faculty with my leadership developed a shared vision for the College:

The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences provides students at Delaware State University with advanced academic skills and knowledge through teaching, research, and service, thereby instilling in them a sense of competency that will help them assume leadership roles in their respective fields of study.

In addition, the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences offers a variety of opportunities to students, whether they emanate from under-represented or majority populations, to become technologically advanced and intellectually aware in the context of multi-culturally diverse yet global world.

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I am passionate about reaching out to the global community and offering educational opportunities to international students and students that wish to study abroad from the United States. I also understand the use of educational technology to advance this vision. Furthermore, it is clear to me that students need practical experiences applying what they have learned in the classroom and international experiences help further this. I played an important role in expanding international programs and exchanges at Delaware State University. As a professor, I have participated in many international programs and mentored students from various universities from the US and Puerto Rico while in South Africa. While serving as Dean, I developed relationships with the University of Havana, Cuba. I also led the effort in an exchange program between the College of Journalism at Beijing Sports University in China and the Department of Mass Communications at Delaware State University during the 2008 Summer Olympics and afterwards. Sports Journalism students also interned during the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada. I also developed a relationship between the Department of Music at Delaware State University and the Nis International Jazz Festival in Serbia. More recently, for the first time in our partnership with Changchun University of Science and Technology in China, I spoke to the freshmen and new graduate students in the opening ceremony for the 2015-2016 academic year. During the same trip to China, I spoke to freshmen entering our 3+1 Accounting Program between Delaware State University and Ningbo University of Technology in China. This academic year, I traveled to various universities in China and Japan speaking to the opening academic year ceremonies at Ningbo University of Technology and to the physics students at the opening academic year ceremony in Changchun University of Science and Technology. I also delivered a paper at the president's forum on higher education at Jilin University of Finance and Economics while in China. I explored new opportunities in Japan, too. The value of international experiences through these programs are emphasized and valued at Florida Gulf Coast University. This is one reason why I am excited about applying for the position of President at Florida Gulf Coast University.

In January 2008, I was appointed to the position of Interim Associate Provost at Delaware State University. In June 2008, I was appointed Associate Provost while retaining my appointment as Dean in an interim capacity until a permanent Dean for the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences was appointed in July 2009. As Associate Provost, I am currently responsible for the Center for Teaching and Learning, Honors Program, Academic Services for Student Athletes, University Bands, Office of Sponsored Research and Title III programs, and International Affairs. The Registrar and Records Office reported to me until the position was upgraded to Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management and moved to Student Affairs. Presently, the position leading Distance Education is an Assistant Vice President and reports to the Interim Provost; this position reported to me before the upgrade in position title and now reports directly to the interim provost. This program is a high priority for generating new revenue. The University Bands now reports to me because of my leadership skills particularly in areas that have difficulty in functioning. It is within this capacity as providing leadership for areas with functionality problems that I have also served as acting chairperson for the Department of Public and Allied Health Sciences for three years and presently provide leadership consultation in the Department of Nursing at

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Delaware State University. I also serve as academic liaison to the University Bookstore and have worked closely with the office responsible for vendor services on campus. Additionally, I am the contract administrator for the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the University and the American Association of University Professors. I have also served as a member of the contract negotiating team and has chief contract negotiator. I also have served as University Hearing Officer during grievances from the faculty when these occur.

As a result of these experiences along with formal academic training, I have developed a keen understanding of the budgetary process and how it relates to the strategic planning process at institutions of higher education. I was responsible for monitoring the progress toward achieving the University Strategic Plan and was responsible for leading the effort in establishing action plans through the time of the self-study for reaccreditation through Middle States Commission on Higher Education in 2012. We received several commendations and met all fourteen standards for accreditation.

I, also, have a fundamental understanding of the relationships between academic affairs, student and legal affairs along with the offices of business and finance, public relations, and university advancement. As Dean and as Associate Provost, I assisted in the process of academic program reviews at the University. Moreover, I have accumulated considerable experience in accreditation processes. I have served as a member of the University Self-Study Steering Committee and have served as a member of the N.C.A.T.E. Steering Committee. Recently, the education programs at Delaware State University received reaffirmation of accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. When Dean, I started the process of seeking accreditation for Mass Communications through Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications and Music Education through National Association of Schools of Music. Both are in the process of preparing proposals to seek accreditation.

Furthermore, I possess the characteristics required by Florida Gulf Coast University of its candidates for the position of President. I have a strong record of advocacy for academics overall while emphasizing the importance of educating students holistically that includes student activities outside of the classroom through service learning and co-curricular activities. These were important personal characteristics that led to my present appointment as Associate Provost. In essence, I believe it is very important for students to have practical experiences applying what they have learned in the classroom through service learning reinforced through co-curricular activities. It is also important to provide living and learning community opportunities for students. I have provided leadership in establishing the Honors Program as a living and learning community that also requires service learning. I believe in a strong partnership between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs in student support services. I will also establish collegial relationships among the various college and community constituencies that are important in overall growth and ultimately to the success of the university in providing opportunities for our students and faculty.

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I also have a distinguished record of teaching and scholarship having been awarded by my colleagues the University Excellence in Teaching and Service Awards at Delaware State University. I have several journal and book publications. In addition, I have completed unpublished reports that exemplify my ability to develop relationships with regional and national organizations and to secure external funds to support these efforts. I also possess excellent interpersonal and communication skills as demonstrated by my record of speaking engagements. As President, it is important to possess strong academic credentials in order to lead academic units within the university primary function, which is the academic enterprise.

Throughout my career, I have participated in shared governance as a faculty member through chairing and serving on faculty senate committees. I continue this by serving in an administrative capacity on faculty senate and university committees. I also established new committees in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences in the spirit of faculty engagement and shared governance. This commitment extends to students and alumni engaging them in the shared governance of the University. Delaware State University is undergoing Program Prioritization Initiative in which through shared governance, the faculty, staff and administration are reviewing all academic and administrative programs and structures to determine the productivity levels of each through the careful analysis of data. Once completed, some programs will be eliminated, merged or enhanced with the goal producing efficiencies through the redistribution of limited resources and the establishment of a university fund reserve. This is an attempt to be proactive and have a fund reserve if state assistance is reduced to the University. This is being done through shared governance and collaboration.

Throughout my career, I have also advocated diversity within the student body and the faculty ranks and have established a record of doing so. Recruitment and retention is important in diversifying the faculty. I understand enrollment management in achieving for student diversity. Throughout my experiences in enrollment management, I pursue diversity as an important goal in recruitment, retention, and persistence of students.

I have an excellent record in recruiting faculty and retaining them, also, as well as professional staff. I have been able to accomplish by listening to the faculty, administrators and staff members to understand their needs. While serving as Acting Chairperson of the Department of Public and Allied Health Sciences, I continued this with recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff. I have also supported them in their research and teaching with providing funding and resources to meet their goals. The world class labs and classrooms attract world class faculty. I have managed assist in the improvement of salary, which also contributes to retention. Above all else, I have created an atmosphere of collegiality and emphasize the integrity of our programs research, service, and teaching. I do so with humor setting an atmosphere that everyone enjoys their experiences and can have fun in their serious work of education.

I was a member of the Enrollment Management Council. Enrollment Management Council under the newly created Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management is responsible for reaching our goal of 5000 students by 2020. This past academic year, our

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enrollment exceeded 4600 undergraduate and graduate student. While serving as acting chairperson for the Department of Public and Allied Health Sciences, the department experienced enrollment and retention that exceeded the University rate. The students have persisted thus improving departmental graduation rates. Presently, I am special consultant for the Department of Nursing and working to improve student NCLEX-RN passage rates. Under my leadership, the Office of Academic Services for Student Athletes has outperformed academically their conference counterparts placing more academic all-conference students than any other university in conference. Our student athletes average 3.00 G.P.A. and graduate in four years or less at over 80% exceeding the University rate. I understand how to recruit, retain, and graduate students.

I am also an advocate for integrating technology into the classroom and support innovations in teaching in general. I will also provide strong leadership to encourage a spirit of academic entrepreneurialism and innovation at Florida Gulf Coast University. Middle States Commission on Higher Education cited the graduate degree program in historic preservation as a model of innovation to be emulated as such at the University in its response to the Delaware State University 2002 Self-Study. I developed and implemented the historic preservation graduate degree program and was the director from 1999 through 2004. All of which are student centered with faculty involvement to facilitate these learning experiences. In the most recent 2012 Self Study, two programs were cited as leading to improved retention and graduate rates that I started while serving as Dean. I began a first year writing program and appointed a director over this program. I also began the process of implementing a new major titled Integrated Studies at the undergraduate level. It is modeled after Liberal Arts and Science Studies programs giving students an option that has two focus areas. If selected as President, I will provide leadership that will take the University to the next level of excellence as I have already demonstrated through a spirit of entrepreneurship and will provide incentives and rewards to faculty and staff that participate.

I have experience in fundraising and have worked closely with the Advancement Office on campus. I have served as co-chair of the Annual Fund at Delaware State University for the faculty. I have also worked with Advancement in organizing teams among the faculty and staff to complete grant proposals to private organizations and corporations. I have worked closely with Advancement in our Sustainability Strategic Goal for the University that is in essence an advancement strategy to cut energy costs that will go directly into the University Foundation for student scholarships through the reduction in overall operating costs for the University. These efforts have been recognized by the federal government and other entities. I have also worked with the colleges in a new fundraising campaign called the Battle of the Colleges a competition to raise more funds than the other colleges through donations from faculty, staff, students, alumni and others. The overall result has been an increase in percentage of giving among faculty and staff, which is important for potential donors to know when making decisions. Also, I have been a part of the President's friend raising campaign. The chief executive officer also must raise friends first before asking them for contributions to the university. While serving as Dean and as Associate Provost, I created an atmosphere of giving and supported friend raising and fund raising. As Dean, I led the effort in the Music

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Department to raise funds by designating a faculty member to take the lead. I provided grant workshop opportunities for her and gave her release time to work on proposals while also mentoring her through the process. She raised approximately \$500,000 from a private donor that allowed us to build a state of the art recording studio, rebuild our music lab and create a music industry concentration in our music major. We hired a professor specializing in music industry to coordinate this academic program. We also hired professional staff to support the students in operating the facility. The students have their own record label and are successful. To date, this was the largest private contribution for the College. Additionally, I have been successful in securing government grants and contracts.

In closing, throughout my academic career, I have demonstrated flexibility showing my ability to adapt and to adjust to new circumstances that have confronted me. At the same time, I possess professional integrity formulated from my educational values based upon a strong understanding of academic standards. It is also important to have a vision that often results from an empathetic understanding of colleagues, students, and people from the wider community. I believe vision and empathy are two of my strongest characteristics. I am strong in my ability to develop goals and measurable objectives to achieve the vision and mission of the university through collegial working relationships both within the university and outside of it. I provide leadership by example. I work tirelessly alongside my colleagues in achieving the goals of the university. Above all else, I possess good humor. I do try to see the pleasantries of situations leading to constructive solutions rather than dwelling on unconstructive exercises in dealing with problems that frequently arise in administrative positions within institutions of higher education. I prefer to see these as challenges offering opportunities to successfully achieve the goals of the university, which are to provide excellent educational opportunities to our students. I do not see problems. I see solutions leading to positive outcomes that advance the university.

It is with great enthusiasm that I apply for the position the President and hope to be select as the chief executive officer of Florida Gulf Coast University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bradley Skelcher". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

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