

NORTHERN New Mexico College



College of Education

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Search Committee: President
Florida Gulf Coast University
c/o Witt/Kieffer
10501 FGCU Blvd. South
Fort Myers, FL 33965

Dear Colleagues:

I was recently made aware of an opening for the position of **President** at Florida Gulf Coast University. After careful consideration of the requirements for the position and the goals stated in FGCU's Strategic Plan, I would like to hereby submit my name for consideration as a candidate. If, after preliminary review by the search committee, you estimate that I have qualifications that may meet the needs of your institution, please feel free to request from me any additional information that may be considered relevant.

In response to the specific qualifications outlined in position profile, I will note that I started my professional career as a high school teacher and later moved on to teaching in higher education. Overall, I have been engaged with teaching and administration in higher education for 32 years now. Through my career, I have fulfilled different roles requiring progressive interdisciplinary administrative responsibilities in liberal arts, teacher education and academic affairs, e.g., program director, graduate program coordinator, associate dean, and dean. Duties have included administration of intensive language programs, international internship opportunities, online curriculum/ program development & delivery, advising, coordination of interdepartmental offerings, programmatic assessment, coordinating scholarship awards, recruitment and retention efforts, writing/ directing/ evaluating grants, extensive participation in national accreditation efforts, developing and implementing university-wide academic assessment programs, faculty supervision, building relationships with stakeholders, and coordinating institutional assessment efforts for accreditation. Most of these required close collaboration with different institutional programs/ schools at both the graduate and undergraduate levels as well with community stakeholders. During my career, I have been "housed" at departments both in Arts and in Education receiving tenure at three different institutions. I have had experience in the development of multiple programs (both undergraduate/ graduate) and served for eight years as elected chair of a Graduate Council charged with all matters pertaining to curriculum development and policies, while addressing needs and interests of diverse constituencies. Consequently, I am well aware of concerns, priorities, and approaches particular to diverse programs/ units.

In my experience, I have found that “young” institutions are very responsive to its stakeholders. However, as they grow there is a clear need to have a viable source of institutional knowledge and experience to guide its progress as it moves forth. I believe by background in higher education and my experience at both comprehensive and research institutions, are a good match with FGCU. As such, I believe that my years as an administrator in higher education, my extensive experience directing grants and developing graduate and undergraduate programs, my responsiveness to stakeholders and my years of experience in assessment & accreditation, may provide me with a desirable background needed to serve FGCU.

In a nutshell:

As noted above, I have been engaged in higher education for over thirty years. I have consistently collaborated in a variety of teacher education programs, e.g., secondary English, elementary and early childhood education, Modern Languages, Reading, and TESOL. For nine years, I served as graduate **program coordinator** for the TESOL programs at the University of Nevada-Reno (UNR) and Salisbury University (SU). Duties included, program development, candidate recruitment, mentoring and advising, scheduling, assessment and accreditation among others. I am well aware of the issues/challenges facing graduate/ undergraduate education and skilled in working collaboratively to address them. For instance, while at UNR, I developed a doctoral program in curriculum studies and ESOL that was uniquely responsive to state needs. Presently at NNMC, I have developed a partnership with Adams State University in Colorado to offer a MA in Educational leadership as well as possibly an EdD. These offerings would be the only ones available in northern New Mexico and would be responsive to unique demographics and contextual needs. I would anticipate that I would be able to offer FGCU the same sort of skills in expanding or developing new programs built on- and off-campus relationships.

The practical experience derived from drawing on shared governance to implement needed programmatic offerings, along with my responsibilities as Special Assistant to the Provost for Academic Assessment (**associate dean** level), demonstrate my abilities to effectively engage a variety of stakeholders from different colleges and programs in developing and implementing responses targeting specific needs in academic affairs. While seeking to ensure candidate excellence, I developed assessment systems aligned with state and national standards and completed data-driven program improvements. I have developed enduring partnerships that have benefited our candidates (e.g., availability of field placements), while impacting school personnel’s ability to meet the increasing needs of a diverse student population. Having taught **online** for over nine years (TESOL program), and having developed what became a rather popular program offering viable alternatives for a wider range of candidates, e.g., early childhood education and elementary education, I can contribute to various programs at FGCU, my expertise in identifying and pursuing innovative opportunities that build on and expand existing programs to address state/ regional high needs areas. I would note that I have had multi-year experience working on grants with school districts across various states and providing professional development to teachers and staff.

I have also been successful in collaborating with colleagues in securing multiple **federally funded grants** to meet educational needs in the region and in implementing successful collaborations with community colleges and neighboring school districts in

Maryland, Delaware and Virginia, and more recently in New Mexico. Early fall 2014 we submitted a grant to the state of New Mexico for an American Indian Teacher Education Program (AITEP), intended to address the need for increased numbers of Native Americans to serve as education professionals in the state. We received notice of approval (\$400,000/ 4 yrs.) in May 2015- the program is presently being implemented. Moreover, over the years, I have also served as a **program/ grant evaluator** for various projects and collaborated with various teams engaged in the preparation of successful proposals to both federal and state agencies.

As a Latino faculty member, cultural pluralism is central to my discipline and the work I do. I consistently engage in providing rich, cross-cultural learning opportunities to the students in my classes as well as in the development and delivery of **training and curricular development** support to faculty targeting the diverse need of today's student population. I actively promote inclusiveness and diversity both in the classes I teach and the programs I oversee. I am committed to promoting and facilitating international opportunities for students as indicated by the varied recruitment ventures I have presided over and involving students from China, Japan and Taiwan. For instance, I developed internship opportunities for our students to engage in TESOL teaching abroad which added rich learning opportunities and professional development for the candidates. While at SU, I endeavored to promote/ implement venues to provide viable program choices for international students interested in studying at SU thus expanding **global educational options**. This experience might be particularly relevant in the region and of benefit to FGCU as it seeks to continue its commitment to improving student learning about diversity and global issues. I believe that my professional background in teacher preparation and international education will be particularly relevant to the globalization of curricular efforts and promotion of real-world learning opportunities for all students at FGCU, particularly in terms of recruitment of international students and expansion of a global curriculum.

Professional Experience:

In terms of the listed job requirements, I will note that I served as a SPA reviewer for TESOL for seven years and as a member of the TESOL/NCATE Team on Professional Standards. In addition, I served as a BOE member for the last eight years. This experience has provided me with (add "a") unique background in the accreditation of teacher education programs and expertise in current trends regarding the accreditation process, e.g., CAEP. I have served as a high school teacher and over the last seventeen years have collaborated closely with school districts in varied grant funded activities, supervision of pre-service candidates, and in-service professional development efforts.

In addition, I have been active in grantmanship securing funds beyond three million dollars over the last twelve years. As part of my duties as PI, I supervised staff handling both the office and field components of programs, and supervised/ coordinated grant related faculty hiring and teaching. These grants have involved collaboration with external partners such as school districts and neighboring community colleges across state lines—all of these provided for various programs responsive to stakeholders training needs, e.g., linguistically diverse students. I have also developed and supervised programs directed at study abroad and internships linked to teacher education programs. In all, I have over **sixteen years of progressive administrative experience** at the university level, including two years as associate dean in academic affairs and, more recently, **dean of a college of education** (now into my third year).

My assigned duties necessarily require cooperation and consensus building among different programs involving both faculty and administration. My service, along with my experience as administrator, program director and faculty, has provided me with a clear understanding of academic and administrative issues affecting a variety of areas along with experience in engaging diverse stakeholders in dialogue that is conducive to consensus and agreeable solutions that serve often-interdisciplinary programs, e.g., Nursing, Teacher Education, English, Social Work, History, Business, and Math. At SU, the Graduate Council I chaired for eight years worked closely with the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee in the program review process and new course approval. Though clearly each campus/ institution faces unique challenges and concerns, I believe this understanding and interdisciplinary engagement with faculty and administrators will come in handy in the implementation of similar collaborative activities at FGCU while promoting a robust culture of participation and contribution that is in turn nourished and sustained by shared governance. Moreover, this experience is indicative of my involvement and commitment to shared governance and adherence to collaborative leadership that is aligned with stated goals and mission in regards to graduate and undergraduate programs, as well as academic affairs over all.

At Salisbury University, I also served as Special Assistant to the Provost for Academic Assessment (**associate dean** level). This experience allowed me to coordinate and develop university-wide academic assessment options aimed at general education goals related to accreditation and to address concerns pertinent to academic affairs- I have also served in a similar capacity at NNMC as we seek accreditation with HLC. I have also engaged in the development and implementation of varied homegrown assessment programs, development of assessment-related faculty training opportunities, responding to campus visits from both NCATE and Middle States, and engaging faculty in the development of outcomes-based assessment plans, instrument development, and data gathering/ analysis. I have also been a member, as part of related duties, of the University Academic Assessment Committee, the Enrollment Management Committee and the Provost's Council, thus providing me with additional experience in the administration, enrollment management, operations and other relevant aspects of higher education and how different constituencies interact as they face institutional issues.

As mentioned above, I have also acquired skills pertinent to program assessment and accreditation through several years of service as a BOE member with NCATE, as a program reviewer and auditor for my SPA (i.e., TESOL), and a member of the national team working on TESOL/NCATE Professional Standards. As such, I am knowledgeable of the professional accreditation process, outcomes-based programmatic assessment and the development and implementation of sound assessment plans. Completion of program goals has required use of technology to manage data, development of robust assessment systems, data analysis, and data-driven decision-making directed at program improvement. Specifically, previously assigned duties required ability to turn data into actionable agenda items and work toward institutional effectiveness, particularly in terms of student learning outcomes assessment for a variety of programs, institutional research, and university accreditation. At New Mexico, I have been asked by the provost to lead the Student Learning Assessment Committee charged with engaging in the assessment of general education needed for institutional accreditation. My experience in program accreditation, along with a range of consulting and academic

experiences in assessment, may prove relevant to FGCU's institutional needs particularly as national accreditation falls under the umbrella of CAEP as it replaces NCATE & TEAC. I would welcome the opportunity to share my expertise as a program reviewer and BOE/CAEP member and jointly work towards developing/ improving suitable assessment plans that conform to FGCU's strategic plan.

As part of my tenure as **dean of the College of Education** at NNMC, I have actively participated in planning, institutional research and evaluations in support of College-wide programs; served as the chief administrator for teacher education programs with direct liaison duties with other appropriate departments and administrative offices; provided leadership in recruiting and developing a quality faculty dedicated to teaching, service, applied research and creative expression; assisted in budget development and assumed the responsibility for effective resource management, conducted reviews of probationary faculty and staff, recommended faculty appointments, rank and salary; recommended faculty candidates for tenure/non-tenure and promotion/non-promotion in accordance with policies; supported the institution's commitment to equal educational opportunity and actively assisted in meeting the actions set forth in the College's affirmative plan; provided leadership in meeting the professional and staff development needs of school districts throughout the service region; identified and coordinated viable grant-funded initiatives related to teacher education; oversaw all teacher education programs to ensure alignment with relevant state and national standards.

Education:

I hold a B.A. in English with additional specialization in secondary English education (ESOL) from the University of Puerto Rico, an M.A. and Ph.D. in Linguistics from Michigan State University, specializing in sociolinguistics, ESL Methodology, second language acquisition, multicultural education, psycholinguistics, bilingualism, reading, and assessment. My professional training involves language instruction, social and cross-cultural perspectives in the study of language, second language teaching methods and assessment. It is because of this background that I have been affiliated with both colleges of education and arts, having obtained tenured three times in my career. I believe that my experience having worked at both English (arts) and Curriculum and Instruction Departments (education), has allowed me to develop the needed skills to bring together different collaborative efforts. I am effective communicator able to articulate responses that bring together different points of view while prioritizing viable options outlining a course of action that is, in nature, inclusive.

Pertinent interests:

In my career, I have been actively involved in curriculum development, both within my own field as well as in allied areas. Program development include undergraduate, masters, and doctoral programs in ESOL. I have developed and taught graduate and undergraduate courses on language and culture, gender issues in linguistics, and introduction to the study of language among others. I have been offering online courses for over ten years now- these being some of the most popular as well as highly regarded offerings at SU. I have lead the development and implementation of course-based measures of student learning outcomes in general education. This project required coordination and consultation between departments and schools across campus, while being mindful of system-wide assessment, accountability expectations

and reporting parameters, data collection and analysis. I take pride in the fact that I see myself, and I am so perceived, as being someone who is willing to face a challenge, able to work collaboratively with various constituencies to identify viable alternatives, someone who is a team player when seeking solutions to problems affecting our student population and an individual successful at mustering faculty involvement in decision making and shared governance.

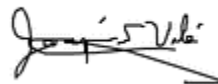
To conclude, I would observe that I am a strong believer in taking 'affirmative steps' aimed at addressing the needs of minority students through the development of programs aimed at improving professional skills of teachers at all levels and in the establishment of joint ventures between programs and/or organizations so as to optimize the use of resources and efforts. As a Latino professional in the field of education, I am fully aware of the need to improve the educational opportunities for future generations—particularly when figures released by the US Department of Education show that about 14% of teachers in the US identify themselves as African-American or Latinos, as compared to about 4% of faculty in colleges and universities. I am looking for an administrative position in an environment that shows promise and commitment to addressing the pressing diversity concerns we face in higher education. A major factor motivating my decision to apply for the present position is FGCU's stated mission and its consistent efforts towards serving the needs of diverse populations.

In sum, I decided to apply for the position given the various opportunities it offers for collaboration in ensuring a successful academic outcome for ALL students. At this point in my career, I am willing to rise to the challenge such a commitment to academic administration entails. I find that my previous work and personal experiences as a faculty member and administrator, both in the humanities as well as in education, will be valuable in engaging in collaborative efforts directed towards achieving the identified strategic goals. The appeal of professional programs sharing a focus on outcomes assessments and collaborating in order to enhance program delivery is particularly appealing to me. I am persuaded my administrative background would enable me to contribute to FGCU.

Enclosed herewith please find a copy of my vitae with a list of references with contact informatio. I will be most happy to provide additional documentation if needed. Thank you very much for your kind attention to my letter. I look forward to hearing from you soon and, if possible, having the opportunity of being of service to Florida Gulf Coast University.

Encl./2

Sincerely,



Joaquín S. Vilá, PhD
Dean College of Education