

06 November 2016

Lucy A. Leske and Robert W. Luke  
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Dear Ms. Leske and Mr. Luke:

Thank you for the notification of my nomination for the position of President at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). This letter, enclosed resume, and list of references serve as indications of my interest in proceeding with the nomination. In the following, I describe the specific areas where I believe my professional competencies, abilities, and administrative experience match the leadership characteristics needed to serve as a visionary, inspiring and effective President for Florida Gulf Coast University.

I have served my entire career as a faculty member and administrator at several public universities, each distinguished by diverse missions, varying student populations and socio-academic profiles, and differing administrative structures and institutional cultures. These have included academic advocacy and administrative experiences as Faculty Senate Chair at California Polytechnic State University, as Dean at Georgia Southern University (GSU) and at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), and most recently as Provost at Lehman College, City University of New York (CUNY). To each of these institutions I brought a sense of ‘disciplined urgency’ and unquestioned integrity, using novel approaches to deal with previously unaddressed issues in order to develop and implement specific plans even within the ambiguity of changing external environments. Some of the actions I led promoted the recruitment and advancement of diverse and scholarly active faculty, the use of information technology and data analytics for metrics calibration, academic program prioritization and improvement, the development of new models to organizational function and structure to enhance effectiveness and efficiencies, and the use of social networks to disseminate information, engage in discussions and consolidate new relationships. Most recently, I led the development of Lehman’s first academic master plan, the submission of Lehman’s first, stand-alone, doctoral program (nurse practitioner), the oversight of the regional accreditation self-study in 2018 under the Middle States Commission on Higher Education’s newly revised criteria, and reverse-transfer agreements with two community colleges from which Lehman receives almost 65% of all students. CUNY Chancellor James B. Milliken recognized the latter of these initiatives as a priority for system-wide implementation. Nevertheless, I made a personal decision to voluntarily tender my resignation as Provost at Lehman in June 2016; but I left the institution and the division of academic affairs well-positioned to continue the strategic initiatives that we embarked during my tenure.

*Strategic Visioning for Higher Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: The Model, Comprehensive University* – The academic vitality and relevance of public universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be driven by the necessary amalgamation of the theoretical and the practical that encourages life-long learning through inquiry, scholarship innovation, and creativity for service in the public interest. This is synonymous with integrative learning and is the hallmark of a learn-by-doing philosophy of education grounded in the liberal arts and sciences: a systematic blending of new knowledge and creative activities that are consistent with and essential to a complete liberal education. Students develop integrative thinking skills by building on prior knowledge, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication skills, technological knowledge, ethics that encourage inclusivity and a respect for differences, and even the ability to cope with ambiguity. Incorporating these principles throughout the entire curriculum should be reinforced with active learning through participation in internships, research, service learning, and other co-curricular activities that also provide students with opportunities to develop leadership skills and engage with the community.

*Enhancing the Academic Experience and Learning Environment for Students and Faculty* – The administrative leadership needed to promote and develop programs that enhance FGCU's academic distinctiveness must be able to articulate clearly defined goals that speak to a strategic regional focus and must manifest the organizational capacity needed to achieve them, even during difficult or uncertain financial times. Notwithstanding, academic and administrative priorities must emphasize student learning and student achievement as the principal measures of institutional effectiveness. The competition for college-ready students and the growth in both previously underrepresented and 'non-traditional' students presents new challenges to strategic enrollment management for the recruitment, retention and timely-graduation of a varying student population. This will require attention to the complete educational experience for undergraduate and graduate students, with the recognition that actions taken have both curricular and financial implications. Key to this endeavor is a commitment to the development of student-centered, learning communities that flourish in a supportive environment while reaffirming core institutional values of academic excellence and service in the public interest. These learning experiences are enhanced through strong and collaborative relationships with community and business partners throughout Southwest Florida and beyond.

Current public demands for the relevancy of academic institutions call for imaginative and flexible approaches to curriculum design and delivery that are student-centered, transcend disciplinary boundaries, and reflect the transformation of traditional notions of teaching and learning, research/scholarship and engagement beyond time and place. Furthering a vision of excellence and achievement in all of these areas requires a commitment to actions that are driven by strategic goals that reflect FGCU's mission. Indeed, the recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement of faculty are manifestations of how the University's mission and vision are accomplished. It is also important to recognize the differing contributions that every faculty member can provide throughout their career. For example, I was responsible for the recruitment and hiring over twenty new faculty at UTEP, and I more than doubled the same at Lehman College including the addition of two new Deans, one of whom is the Founding Dean of the new School of Health Sciences, Human Services and Nursing.

*Fundraising and External Relations* – Although led by the President, active engagement in advancement efforts is a shared institutional responsibility. This is particularly important for public institutions that are experiencing decreasing financial support, competition for recruitment, retention and timely graduation of talented students, increased competition for recruitment and retention of diverse and talented faculty, anticipating trends in instructional technology and computing infrastructure, and reinvesting in the learning structures of the future. It will be essential for FGCU's next President to embrace, communicate and engender a sense of pride, ownership and place for all citizens in Southwest Florida, and especially for all friends and alumni.

At Lehman College, comprehensive campaign initiatives are both nascent and centralized. Thus, my activities in this area were focused on assisting the Deans in developing distinctive case statements for a future campaign. While Dean of the College of Science at UTEP, I had the opportunity to engage alumni, donors and friends for the College's \$28M contribution to the University's \$200M campaign. I initiated a statewide road trip in 2010 to visit with alumni and donors in cities across Texas. Private support for multiple scholarships and naming opportunities served to leverage funding for our secondary math and science teacher preparation efforts, programmatic support for the shortening of time-to-degree for medical students, and the recruitment and hire of Dr. Luis Echegoyen (former Director of the Chemistry Division at the National Science Foundation, and former Chair of the Chemistry Department at Clemson University) as the Robert A. Welch Endowed Chair in Chemistry. Through all of these activities we were able to secure commitments of over \$9M two years before the completion of the campaign. My experience in developing strategic approaches to garnering funds for faculty hiring, new resources and facilities will aid in advancing institutional advancement priorities.

*Commitment to a Culture of Inclusivity, Diversity and Respect* – My commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access to opportunities for all is personal, long-standing and has been fortified with increasing levels of academic leadership responsibilities. While at GSU, I recruited and hired the first females, Asian and East-Asian faculty as chairs of academic departments, and recruited and hired the first African-American tenure-track faculty member to the School of Technology. As Dean at UTEP, I recruited and hired the first two female Hispanic chairs of academic departments and a globally diverse faculty. In all of the searches that I led or participated in, I sought to hire individuals who advanced institutional values and remained passionately curious about the success of their students and colleagues, the challenges posed by their jobs, and their own professional growth. Recently, I co-lead the development of [Lehman's Strategic Plan for Faculty Diversity](#) and a revised [Careers at Lehman](#) website to showcase the life, work and inclusive environment promoted by Lehman's faculty and professional staff. I have also had the opportunity to speak at conferences and institutions regarding the recruitment and advancement of women and minority faculty in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines and in administrative ranks. I have embraced the responsibility to serve as a mentor and advisor to women and minority faculty at several institutions. My professional and personal experiences will be particularly useful in advancing FGCU's commitment to diversity and inclusivity.

*Leadership and Management Style* – A successful leader manifests the organizational capacity needed to achieve a common vision with candor, consistency in communication, purposeful collaboration, and clarity of expectations, while recognizing that the realization of stated priorities only occurs with the adherence to principles of shared governance and shared responsibility. My approach to leadership and management is best described as visionary, creative, clear, consistent, fair, and decisive. Throughout my entire career I have been passionately committed to leading with integrity and honesty. My approach to prioritization and decision-making is open and shared with all interested constituents and stakeholders. I practice these principles through strong collaboration, communication, understanding, and respect. I strive to not only meet, but to exceed challenges.

While one of the demands on academic institutions is to prepare the next generation of leaders for life and work in a 21<sup>st</sup> century that Bob Johansen calls an increasingly VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world, colleges and universities are also confronted with the need to meet five key expectations; they must be accountable, sustainable, inclusive, relevant, and flexible. The strategic visioning, decisive problem-solving and entrepreneurship needed for this new environment are attributes and responsibilities for which I am well prepared. In recognizing FGCU's significant growth and progress in its first two decades, I embrace the opportunity to provide the principled leadership needed to advance a distinctive vision for FGCU that focuses on strategic and pragmatic academic growth, charts a financially sustainable future, achieves new levels of success as a regional comprehensive university committed to serve a diverse community of socially committed and globally engaged learners, and meets the needs and expectations of Southwest Florida and beyond.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I welcome further discussion with you throughout the search process. Please feel free to contact me directly should you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



Dr. Anny Morrobel-Sosa