

November 7, 2016

Presidential Search Committee  
Florida Gulf Coast University

It is with enthusiasm that I submit my application for the position of President of Florida Gulf Coast University. As a current member of California State University, Fresno executive leadership team; along with significant, progressive, administrative experiences at a diverse set of institutions; and having served as the Board Chair of a non-profit organization, I am well prepared to effectively lead Florida Gulf Coast University. As President I would build upon a strong legacy of sustained and successful work of the past, embracing the energetic and ambitious community of creative faculty, dedicated staff and passionate alumni/community members at Florida Gulf Coast University and Fort Myers' area. It will be important to nurture the many gifts and talents of the Florida Gulf Coast University community to meet the challenges of higher education and increase their effectiveness to continue to be one of the premier institutions of higher learning.

My passion for first generation and diverse students; combined with a focus on experiential opportunities emphasizing teaching, learning, and technology (empowering students to be productive citizens, ethical leaders, and life-long learners); is a strong force in my desire to seek the Florida Gulf Coast University Presidency. I am captivated by Florida Gulf Coast University's mission, core values, tradition of excellence, and testimony of successful partnerships. Florida Gulf Coast University, like California State University, Fresno and the University of Texas at Arlington, RIT, McDaniel College and Ithaca College is an institution characterized by its well-rounded students, preparing students for productive careers, student success, innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, and making a significant contribution to its people, communities, and the world. I find this very exciting. I have a strong understanding of, and experience with, the importance of a residential campus education. I understand the culture of residential comprehensive universities; it is rooted in my experiences. My experiences provided powerful student learning environments which served to shape my educational philosophy and ultimately my success at other institutions (The University of Texas at Arlington, Rochester Institute of Technology, and Fresno State University – comprehensive institutions with strong traditions). Most of my years as a faculty member and administrator in higher education have been at comprehensive universities.

Core to who I am as a person and a leader is a strong personal commitment to higher education access/opportunity, value diversity and inclusion and the need for effective and diverse educational delivery systems that lead to student success. I am a first-generation college student – the son of a baker and homemaker immigrated from Havana, Cuba. My father had a sixth-grade education. I understand the life changing difference a college education can have on students and their families – no matter their age or background. College success changes lives. I work very intentionally at building strong and authentic relationships and serving as a positive role model and a mentor and to express my gratitude to those who mentored and guided me.

As a college administrator, I bring a great amount of administrative and teaching experience, passion, enthusiasm and energy to my work. The accomplishments I cite in my resume have clearly been an outgrowth of the dedication and team approach of many individuals focusing on mission-driven-strategic plans. That is why I believe it is essential to support professional development and to foster a campus climate and community characterized by innovation, collegiality, civility, excellence and collaboration. At Fresno State, I have worked with our leadership team colleagues and recently we were ranked 25<sup>th</sup> on the list of top 30 national universities category by Washington Monthly and top public university in graduation rate performance, U.S. News, a testament to our initiatives.

I have effectively led change within diverse, dynamic, and increasingly complex environments. I understand the intricacies and importance of a variety of learning modalities from multiple perspectives - including those of access and completion, pedagogy, industry needs, and viable business models. Rochester Institute of Technology, University of Texas at Arlington, and California State University, Fresno are good examples of complex environments that deliver education through a variety of interconnected modalities – on campus, on line distance learning, partner universities, and continuing education. Additionally, at all three Universities we had very strong partnerships designed to respond to the needs of industry, the community and the state.

I possess a deep commitment to a student-centered focus. Throughout my career, I have consistently worked collaboratively with faculty, staff, coaches, students, alumni, community, state, and national leaders. Student success has been a driving focus of my work as we work collectively to help students succeed in college and beyond both for their future and for the future of the university, state, country, and world. I am energized by the promise of how a quality academic program, combined with high impact experiences such as undergraduate research, service learning, internships, study abroad, community engagement, co-curricular learning, student employment, and other vibrant student life programs such as intercollegiate athletics can be truly transformational. At The University of Texas at Arlington, our staff received the National Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) Ted K. Miller Achievement of Excellence Award for our high impact best practices and assessment. As an undergraduate, I myself took advantage of these opportunities as a student athlete and highly involved student. My goal is to help promote a sense of community, belonging and develop well-rounded students. I have extensive experience in strengthening of student life, school spirit and building/enhancing college traditions; meeting the needs of students offering services and resources needed to improve student success; building new housing, athletic and recreation facilities; and getting students involved, engaged and building environments that facilitate a sense of belonging for students.

I am equally committed to a strong and engaged faculty and shared governance. Faculty and the resources to create quality programs are critical to the excellence of Florida Gulf Coast University and to the work of the state of Florida. It has been my privilege to work with truly amazing faculty at several universities who are excited by the process of enhancing student learning, success through their disciplines and innovative pedagogy. I value, respect, and understand the work of faculty in teaching, research, and service. I have served as a faculty member at a number of institutions over my career. You will note on my vita extensive experience in teaching undergraduates and graduate students at several institutions over my

career. I have a love of teaching and engaging with students in the classroom. It has also kept me grounded in both teaching and research activity and connection to faculty colleagues. At both Fresno State and the University of Texas at Arlington, I have served on the Provost's Executive Leadership Team which has given me great insight and closer understanding of these Divisions of Academic Affairs.

I have a great appreciation for the important role our alumni play. Upon graduation from my alma mater, I have stayed in touch and served them as needed. I have been involved across my career in developing alumni connection programs. At all of the institutions where I have served, I have participated by attending receptions and programs where alumni are recognized and to thank them for their contributions. Most importantly, I have had the privilege to remain engaged in the lives of many alumni through a myriad of milestones such as new jobs, further education, marriage, children, and loss from all institutions I've worked. I have fostered positive relationships with alumni.

I have a record of successful, strong and creative leadership, always striving to achieve and define best practices. My style is both collaborative and decisive. I believe great ideas are inspired by listening and staying abreast of high impact practices in higher education. I enjoy being creative when faced with problems, and this creativity has helped produce significant results in challenging situations. I have the ability to fully embrace ambiguity and am persistent in bringing ideas to execution. The expectation I have for the leadership team is that decisions will be mission driven; encompass the impact on students, faculty, staff, and the community; and always based on what is in the best interest of the University. I communicate in an open, honest, straight-forward manner and always with respect for those with whom I interact.

Managing budgets based on student fees, revenues, grants, development, and state funding has helped me to understand the importance of being entrepreneurial and the successful integration of budgeting, planning, and communication. The Divisions of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management I have overseen have developed continual assessment that helps inform our decision making as we move into an age where academic/institutional analytics is ever more important.

As the Chairman of the Board for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, the largest organization (15,000) of student affairs administrators, I have successfully helped lead this organization during the most successful era of the organization. Working with a board is different from reporting to one individual. I have gained incredible experiences working in this role helping set the strategic plan for the organization, the national agenda for our field and student related issues in public policy, government relations, working with board members from across the country/world and meeting the needs of our members.

Throughout my career I have had the opportunity to be part of a diverse set of institutions of higher education. These diverse institutions afforded me the opportunity to work with several very successful presidents, observe their leadership styles, and shape my own philosophies and work style. Throughout my career I have also worked at institutions or through professional organizations where I worked closely with others that have become successful presidents who have encouraged me to become a President. I have also attended the American Council of

Education and Berkeley Executive leadership programs receiving encouragement. I am looking for the right fit to work with colleagues as partners in the educational enterprise.

I have enjoyed the privilege of leading in good times as well as effectively managing crises and conflict. My career has focused on student learning, student success, wellness and on student safety. I have managed tragedies such as student deaths, campus fires, and health crises. I have worked with media, legal counsel, community and business leaders, and parents. I am adept and experienced in a variety of contexts. I have been a national leader in establishing Behavior Intervention teams and training administrators in this area. At Rochester Institute of Technology, we won a national award for our team. I have implemented a variety of student success programs. At University of Texas at Arlington, with our Provost, I implemented an Honor Code.

Ultimately, the success of any institution will rely on a talented, dedicated and diverse faculty, staff and student body who are committed to a vision for the future. Collaboration with all stakeholders, support for the core mission, values and flexibility to adapt to changing needs - are all elements of this success. In concert with colleagues, I have the ability to meet state goals, system objectives, direct administrative staff and be a good steward of precious institutional resources. I am a person of honesty, integrity and good character and work with a high degree of transparency and accountability. I have served in my career at some very successful comprehensive universities, colleges and institute (University of Texas at Arlington, Fresno State and RIT), as well as had great experiences in private higher education. My experiences in the successful California, Texas and New York State university systems would be helpful to me in the Florida system. My experiences indicate strong fundraising, accreditation and capital improvements background. I would look forward with colleagues to developing a strategic vision for the college's future. I possess the courage, integrity, knowledge, stamina, and leadership skills to effectively lead Florida Gulf Coast University into the future. I have a genuine interest in the role of President, an excitement for this opportunity, an understanding of national issues impacting higher education, and a personal and professional desire to serve Florida Gulf Coast University and the state of Florida.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Frank R. Lamas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "F".

Frank R. Lamas